INTERSTICES 09

A JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE AND RELATED ARTS

EXPAT: PLACES/SPACES/BAGGAGE

INTERSTICES

A Journal of Architecture and Related Arts,
Expat: Places/Spaces/Baggage, Volume 9

Interstices: A Journal of Architecture and Related Arts is an open forum for the dissemination of architecture and thought. It is a non-profit journal published once a year. To remain independent, *Interstices* relies upon private support to fund its editorial production. Annual individual sponsorship is available from $100; corporate sponsorship from $1,000; and institutional sponsorship from $3,000. Sponsors will receive full acknowledgement of their contribution and a copy of each issue of *Interstices* for which they are a sponsor.

This issue is supported by

The School of Architecture and Planning, NICAI, The University of Auckland,
The School of Art and Design, AUT University (Institutional Sponsors);
Architectus (Corporate Sponsor); ASC Architects, Cheshire Architects,
JASMAX, Moller Architects and Pete Bossley Architects (Sponsors).

Issue Editors:
Julia Gatley (julia.gatley@auckland.ac.nz),
Carl Douglas (carl.douglas@aut.ac.nz)

Design and Layout:
Patricia Burgetsmaier
Cover design based on a detail from Carl Douglas, "Untitled Tower for Daniel" (2006)

Production:
Patricia Burgetsmaier, Julia Gatley, Carl Douglas, Ginny Sullivan

ISSN 1170-585X

Published by Enigma, Auckland, November 2008.

Print production by GEON. Auckland
The Editors invite submissions of articles, reports, book and project reviews, and translations.
All correspondence should be addressed to The Editors, Interstices, School of Art and Design, AUT University, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, New Zealand.
Books for reviews and advertising should be forwarded to The Editors as above.

Contents

Introduction
Expat: Places/Spaces/Baggage

Julia Gatley and Carl Douglas

In 2005, the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) celebrated its centenary and convened a conference titled *Taking Stock*, which featured as keynote speakers a series of New Zealand-educated architects who practise overseas. The conference sought to gain a perspective on New Zealand architecture from expatriate eyes. In the same vein, another expat New Zealander, Helene Furján, now working at the University of Pennsylvania, suggested the expat theme for *Interstices* 09.

Expatriates take up residence away from home. In a present marked by intense human displacement and global hyper-connection, expatriatism is no longer an exceptional state but a commonplace, perhaps even typical, condition. For some, refugees and fugitives, nomadism is enforced, temporarily at least. For others, the adoption of nomadism is made possible by the ubiquity and pervasiveness of electronic communications and high-speed travel. Many disciplines have been transformed by the hybridities of expertise brought about by expanded networks: international alliances and multi-national practices are unexceptional.

The expatriate is sometimes seen as a figure of divided loyalties. Julia Kristeva describes the exile as a "melancholy lover of a vanished space" (1991: 9). But is the expat necessarily nostalgic? Perhaps instead of being an exile, a homeless stranger, the expat is at home everywhere. The question could even be asked: is home an outmoded ideal, a sedentary concept with dubious applicability to a nomad world? Paraphrasing part of Deleuze and Guattari's famous account of nomadism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto suggest that the nomad is in fact the one standing still: "The nomad on the steppes stays still relative to the greening of the landscape, by moving at the speed of annual climatic fluctuation" (2006: 52). The nomad finds stasis in perpetual motion.

Interstices 09 called for papers that examine the spaces and structures of the expatriate and the consequences for architecture and urbanism of a world defined by flows, circulation and temporary alliances. What kind of view is gained by being an expat? What problems face the expat? How are ideas and practices transformed by being displaced from one cultural location to another? What new architectural forms are produced by the contemporary culture of mobility?

Many of the contributors to this issue of *Interstices* themselves write from the perspective of being, or having been, an expat. Some write of this experience, while others present case studies of expats and expat spaces. The issue opens with David Beynon's "Refusal of Home? Architecture Ex-*Patriota*". Beynon proffers a series of scenarios in which home is refused. These range from a portable 'Slinky House', which he and others designed some ten years ago, to 'Wallpaper* people' in Singaporean wine bars, international students in noodles bars and bubble tea-houses in Melbourne, the homeless, global nomads and the inten-

sity and state of flux of particular East Asian capitals and large cities. Beynon associates the refusal of home with the active engagement with impermanence and change.

Linked to the previous paper by references to Japanese Metabolism, Tom Daniell's "From Far East to Middle East", opens and closes with discussions of the Tokyo architect Arata Isozaki's Qatar National Library, designed in 2000-2 with evident reference to Isozaki's earlier Clusters in the Air project (1960-62) and under construction at the present time. Daniell makes reference to Clusters in the Air, and to Isozaki's utopian Mirage City project (1996-97), to critique the Doha building, arguing that while it might be Metabolist in form, it is "diametrically opposed" to it in intent: in particular, it was not designed to accommodate the growth and change so fundamental to Metabolist thinking. Daniell suggests that Mirage City is more Metabolist in its intent, presupposing "a population of global nomads" and thus perpetual change.

Interstices 09 then moves from East to West. Deane Simpson, in "Nomadic Urbanism: The Senior Full-time Recreational Vehicle Community", pursues American grey nomads, the huge number of retirees who choose to live life on the road, in their RVs. He discusses the appeal of the RV lifestyle and characterizes the behaviours common to many RVers. The huge and increasing number of people who choose to live this way demonstrates that this comparatively new form of nomadism is significant and thus deserving of greater scholarly attention.

The final two papers in the refereed section are concerned with New Zealand material. Michael Findlay's "So High You Can't Get Over It: Neo-classicism, Modernism and Colonial Practice in the Forming of a Twentieth-century Architectural Landmark" analyzes the Amyas Connell-designed house High and Over at Amersham, Buckinghamshire, without doubt one of the best-known buildings produced by an expat New Zealand architect. Findlay gives unprecedented attention to Connell's New Zealand background and experience and to the design of the High and Over landscape. Robin Skinner's paper, "Further Investigations into an Authorship: Reassessing the Dixon Street Flats Archive", retraces conflicting memories and research regarding the authorship of Wellington's Dixon Street Flats and presents new evidence in support of émigré architect Ernst Plischke's involvement in its design, even while archival sources remain inconclusive.

We open the non-refereed section with a beautiful drawing by Ruth Watson, titled "Pattern Recognition". The pattern reflects Watson's ongoing interest in the history and art of maps and alternative mappings. In "Serendipity: Between Making a Magazine and Writing History", Justine Clark reflects on the role of contingency in the formation of architectural history, based on her experiences of both co-writing *Looking for the Local* (Clark & Walker, 2000) and editing *Architecture Australia*. From one editor to another, John Walsh, in "Places, Spaces, Baggage", argues that our criticism and appreciation of architecture are heavily coloured by undeclared critical baggage. Two essays examine specific historical instances of displaced architectural practice. In "Czechoslovakian Crystal in Pavlova Paradise: Vladimir Čačala, 1926-2007", Linda Tyler traces the life and career of this Czech émigré architect, resident in New Zealand from 1952; and in "An Architectural History of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation", Gay Sweely records the overlooked architecture of an expat community in New Zealand's South Island. "Transnational World: Imagining an Afterspace", by

Rowan Fraser, postulates the spatiality of an instantaneous, real-time world: subjected to the dominance of time, space is reduced to a thin, contingent, ad-hoc 'afterspace'. This is followed by the winning entry and finalists for The University of Auckland's inaugural Simon Devitt Prize for Photography.

We have been spoilt for choice in selecting books to review in this issue, with Patrick Reynolds and John Walsh's *New New Zealand Houses* having appeared at the very end of 2007, and a steady stream of new books in 2008: Tony van Raat's *Trenta Case = Thirty Houses in New Zealand*; Johann Bernhardt's *A Deeper Shade of Green: Sustainable Urban Development, Building and Architecture in New Zealand*; Stephen Stratford's *Architecture Workshop, Architecture +, Studio Pacific Architecture* and Pip Cheshire and Patrick Reynolds' *Architecture Uncooked: The New Zealand Holiday House Through an Architect's Eye*.

Unable to accommodate reviews of all of these, we have selected two books of particular relevance to our expat theme: Tom Daniell's *After the Crash: Scenes from Post-Bubble Japan* and Christoph Schnoor's *La Construction des Villes: Le Corbusiers Erstes Stadtebauliches Traktat von 1910/11*. Daniell is an expat New Zealander who has lived and practised architecture in Japan for many years; Schnoor is an expat German who lives in Auckland and teaches architecture at Unitec. In *After the Crash*, Daniell writes about the architecture of his adopted home. It is reviewed by Andrew Barrie, another New Zealander who lived and worked in Japan for many years. Schnoor writes about Le Corbusier's formative experiences and writings made while in Germany. *La Construction des Villes* is reviewed by Tanja Poppelreuter, another expat German now resident in Auckland. Those of us who cannot read Le Corbusier's French or Schnoor's German will have to wait for translation into English before being in a position to make full use of this weighty new tome.

Interstices 09 includes two exhibition reviews. Sarah Treadwell reviews *Pulp Fictions: The Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* and *Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing*, two exhibitions that were shown concurrently at the Adam Art Gallery at Victoria University of Wellington in 2007. Carl Douglas reviews *[arc/sec]*, a recent exhibition of environmentally-responsive architectural systems at AUT University's St. Paul St Gallery.

Following the reviews is Andrew Barrie's interview of Japanese architect Jun Aoki. Aoki visited New Zealand this year in conjunction with the Japan Foundation's travelling exhibition of architectural projects funded through the Kumamoto Artpolis programme.

The issue concludes with Sam Harnett's photographs of *Long Live the Modern*, the exhibition at which *Interstices* 09 is launched.

Unsatisfied with generalities and commonplaces, *Interstices* pries into crevices and takes up residence in the in-between. We hope you enjoy these forays into the interstitial spaces of contemporary architectural practice and spatial thinking as much as we have enjoyed assembling them.

References:

Bernhardt, J. (Ed.) (2008). *A Deeper Shade of Green: Sustainable Urban Development, Building and Architecture in New Zealand*. Auckland: Balasoglou Books.

Cheshire, P., & Reynolds, P. (2008). *Architecture Uncooked: The New Zealand Holiday House Through an Architect's Eye*. Auckland: Godwit.

Clark, J., & Walker, P. (2000). *Looking for the Local: Architecture and the New Zealand Modern*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Daniell, T. (2008). *After the Crash: Scenes from Post-Bubble Japan*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kristeva, J. (1991). *Strangers to Ourselves*. Trans. L. S. Roudiez. New York; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Reiser, J., & Umemoto, N. (2006). *Atlas of Novel Tectonics*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Reynolds, P., & Walsh, J. (2007). *New New Zealand Houses*. Auckland: Godwit.

Schnoor, C. (2008). *La Construction des Villes: Le Corbusiers Erstes Stadtebauliches Traktat von 1910/11*. Zürich: GTA Verlag.

Stratford, S. (Ed.) (2008). *Architecture Workshop, Architecture +, Studio Pacific Architecture*. Auckland: Architectural Publications Trust.

van Raat, T. (2008). *Trenta Case = Thirty Houses in New Zealand*. Auckland: s.p.

Refereed Papers

Refusal of Home?
Architecture Ex-*Patriota*

David Beynon

In 1999, the author was one of the designers of a competition-winning 'Home of the Future' (*AlsoCAN Architects* with *Multiplicity*, 1999a). This was a design that speculated on the idea of home in a future where itinerancy would become the prevalent mode of dwelling. In 2008, *Interstices* asks, 'What is it to refuse home?', a question that seems to assume that expatriation involves a deliberate estrangement from homeliness and its connotations. Springing from reflections on this question and ideas of future homes that came out of the competition entry, this paper explores the connection between expatriation and dwelling. The architecture of the expatriate is considered in a number of potential contexts: as a dwelling for a contemporary urban nomad, as a place for singular belonging ex-*patriota* and as part of the urban environment.

The Slinky House

> You are an urban professional in the year 2021.
>
> The project you are currently working on is terminated.
>
> Your employment contract is therefore terminated.
>
> To survive the ultra-rationalist 21st century you, your current partner and your two children will, of necessity have to relocate to wherever your talents are in demand.
>
> You rely on your bargaining skills to land another short-term postion: be it across town, country or the globe. (*AlsoCAN Architects* with *Multiplicity*, 1999a, 1999b)

In 1999, just before the Millennium Bug was supposed to wipe out the modern world, the author was part of a group of architects and designers who entered a competition to design a house of the future. This competition asked the question of how the idea of home might change by 2020 (Museum Victoria, 1999). The group's design, dubbed the 'Slinky House' after its resemblance to the coiled metal toy (Fig. 1), won the competition and received some publicity. The designers basked in their fifteen minutes of fame, spent their prize money and went back to their real work. However, the project was concerned with the question of architecture's place in a world of peripatetic workers and nomadic urban professionals. These concerns remain current, so the Slinky House is a suitable starting point for a discussion about questions of home, expatriation and architecture.

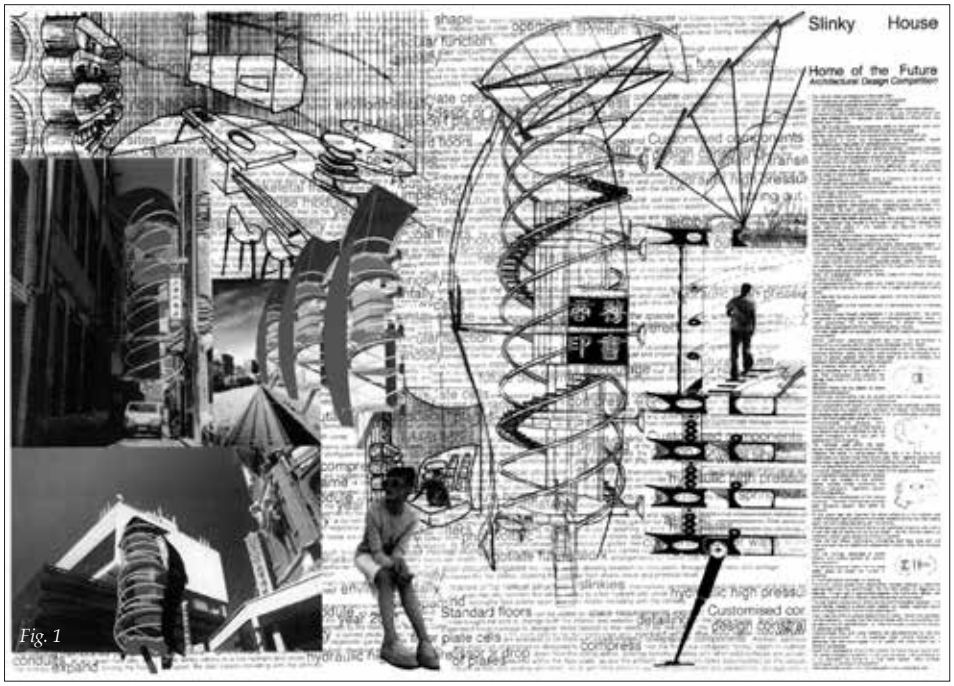


Fig. 1: Slinky House, original competition entry sheet. Source: AlsoCAN Architects (David Beynon, Jane McDougall & Andrew Morant) in conjunction with Multiplicity (Sioux Clark & Tim O'Sullivan).

The competition entry proposed the following scenario. Urban professionals of the year 2021 would be employed on short-term contracts, potentially anywhere across the globe. The ability to remain mobile would be a key factor in making the most of opportunities. Correspondingly, the idea of dwelling as a permanent place, anchored geographically to a single location would become untenable. Instead, the Slinky House proposed a tubular, multi-storey dwelling that would be compactable and transportable.

Its structure and services could be attached to the workplace infrastructure of its inhabitants, or it could be self-supporting and self-sufficient. In an urban context, it could occupy under-utilized and interstitial spaces, straddling lanes, attaching limpet-like to sides of office towers, or appropriating their rooftops. Its physical shape – a series of elliptical recycled plastic floor plates connected by a surrounding stair structure – was devised to optimize ease of transport and differentiate functions and usage within (Fig. 2). Fittings and fixtures would be inserted in the cellular structure floor plates, customized to its inhabitant's requirements. 'Slinky' tubes wound helically around the stairs and the plates provided an expandable structure (Fig. 3). For transportation, the Slinky House would compress like a Chinese lantern, floor plates stacking flat on top of each other with the tubes coiled closely around them. It was also proposed that the Slinky House would facilitate the usage of solar power and recycling of water, so it could have a symbiotic rather than purely parasitic relationship with its building-host (one of the reviewers of the Slinky House described it as "tick-like") (Home of the Future Competition, 1999: 12-13). An image of the Slinky House shows it suspended in a narrow alleyway in Melbourne's Chinatown (Fig. 4). Inside, its occupier is connected both physically and virtually to the environment from which the Slinky hangs, until the day when his/her contract is completed. Then the Slinky is compacted, placed into a container and delivered to its next location.

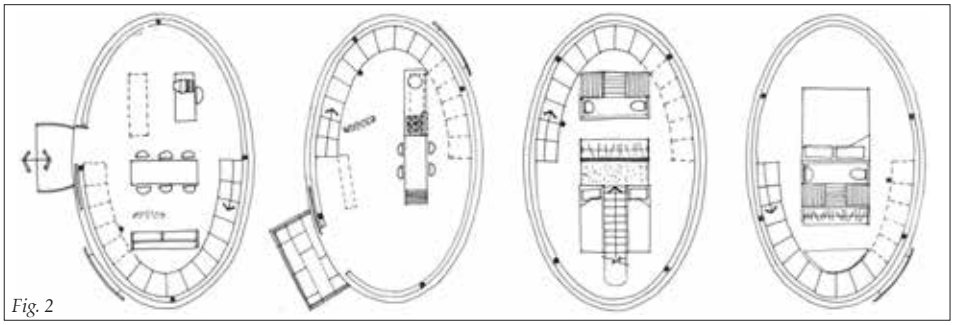


Fig. 2

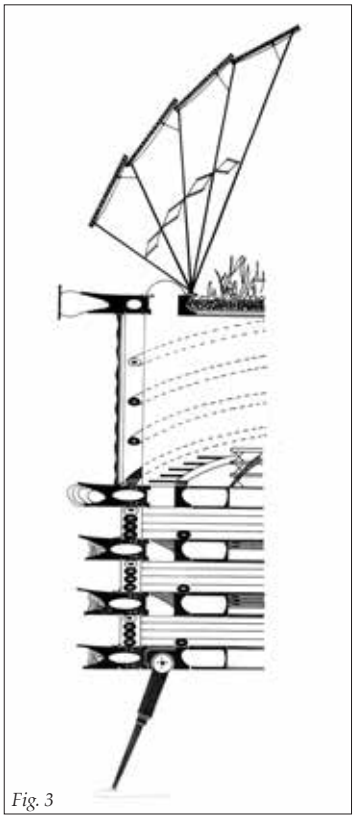


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 2: Slinky House – possible floor plans. Source: AlsoCAN Architects with Multiplicity.

Fig. 3: Slinky House section. Source: AlsoCAN Architects with Multiplicity.

Fig. 4: Slinky House in laneway setting. Source: AlsoCAN Architects with Multiplicity.

Expatriates – At Home in the World?

Expatriates are conventionally imagined as urban, applying their professional or business skills within the global economy according to opportunity and demand. They are the heirs to the world of colonial expansion and trade, and while as contemporary global urbanites they might not enjoy quite the exalted status of their colonial forbears, they are still a privileged class. They have, in Bourdieu's (1993) terms, an abundance of capital. Due to their education and background, they have both economic and social capital. This status enhances their cultural capital and engenders their symbolic capital to the point that in cities across the world, commerce, retail and architecture are influenced to serve their tastes and desires. In Singapore, for example, such recent developments as the increasing use of public and riverside spaces for drinking and dining owe part of their origins to its expatriate population. The space of the Singaporean wine bar occupies an ambiguous zone between local site and faraway idea in terms of its content (wine), its embodiment of such an environment for consuming it and the globalized bodies of its consumers. Neil Leach might refer to it as an *aesthetic cocoon*, an example of the globalized elite's reaction to the frag-

mentation of contemporary cities, a retreat into aestheticized comfort, a kind of generic high-style environment inhabited worldwide by, as he puts it, "Wallpaper* people" (Leach, 2002). Leach's discussion of cocooning indicates a sense of belonging within shared spaces that can be generated by the globalizing of a particular kind of taste-culture. These postmodern cosmopolitans have their own aesthetic (and anaesthetic) environments in which to plug bodily in each city. In the absence of traditional ties of belonging, the Wallpaper* modern style signifies the presence of the like-minded, the like-dressed and the like-interested, in a reassuring environment of exquisite detailing and rarefied taste. Their collective presence in particular locations, such as along Singapore's waterfront, is demonstrative of what Appadurai has called *translocalities*, in which particular kinds of localities are generated that are sustained through the continual presence of outsiders (1996: 192).

Looking at this from a less Western perspective, another example of expatriate impact might be represented by the multitude of businesses in the vicinity of Australian universities that are patronized largely by a shifting population of international students. For instance, in the inner Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn, otherwise a bastion of the Anglo-Celtic middle-class, there exists around Swinburne University's campus a busy mixture of Indonesian and other Asian cafés and grocery stores, which provide much of the contemporary character of the area. While it might be arguable whether international students are expatriates, their increasing numbers, wealth and consumer influence suggest that they fulfil a similar role in their places of temporary settlement. The fact that the majority of international students in Australia are from various parts of Asia has traditionally been seen as indicative of Australia's position as an education provider. However, the physical changes engendered by their presence are indicative of a future in which cultural hegemony might be derived from other sources. Apart from such establishments as student noodle bars, the increasing number of businesses dealing in bubble tea, Japanese crepes, Hello Kitty merchandise, anime figurines and Canto-pop in Australian cities suggests the growth of Eastern-originated global trends that will easily counter the spread of wine bars and Wallpaper* people. However, whether exemplified by Singaporean wine bars or Melbournian bubble tea cafés, design operates as a code: understanding of the messages inherent in these spaces is signified by the dress and demeanour of the people who frequent them.

However, do such spaces correspond with the question, "What is it to refuse home?", posed in this issue of *Interstices*, and can the idea of home be engendered by a global network of designer bars, cafés and resorts? What of expatriates' actual living spaces? Despite the existence of expatriate-friendly public environments, a sense of place under expatriate conditions is necessarily conditional. For the contemporary expatriate, life is a process of mediating between physical and virtual realities. For the expatriate, even more than for the migrant, moving from one location to another is not so much a transfer of self to a new territory, as the repositioning of the physical body in another part of a web of visible and invisible connections. From most locations within this web, the same resources can be tapped, the same services used, the same entertainments enjoyed. The individuality of each location is arguably restricted to a layer of physical stimuli – weather, local language, cuisine – that can be enjoyed, mediated or even virtually negated by globalized infrastructure.

It could be argued that the existence of wine bars and bubble tea cafés in increasing numbers of cities worldwide indicates not the spreading of distinct cultural places but the merging of particular places in a continuous global non-place. In this continuum, the expatriate exists, as if in one of Augé's airports, engaged in a constant *process* in which there is no real place, but only a series of procedures (Augé, 1995). However, such an argument places too much emphasis on the expatriate as a passive recipient of processes and stimuli. It suggests that globalized people emerge fully formed to fit their globalized environment, rather than this environment being in constant reformation and flux due to their agency. It also negates the possibility that the myriad small differences – including architectural differences – between actual places might be able to intervene, punctuating the smoothness of space with real difference. Despite the advances in electronic communications, physical locations still have to be settled and inhabited. Leach's proposition that aesthetic cocoons provide settings for such people to interact as communities – that such spaces provide not just ambience but also the conditions for human connection – suggests that expatriate appropriation of space can be productive.

Mobile or Sedentary, Permanent or Ephemeral?

Architecture – including that of Leach's Wallpaper* people and Melbourne's Asian students – is traditionally static. Architecture is usually the backdrop to action but not a participant in that action. It signifies permanence, aspirations towards the conquest of time. The notion of permanent settlement is the fundamental basis of cities, manifested in solidly immovable buildings and their defined surroundings, placed and codified by the boundaries of precincts, cities, states and nations. This is not just symbolic. Buildings stand as mute demarcation of territorial ownership, signifying the primacy of tenure and the status of landowners. Homelands are defined by the presence of homes. Homeland security is based on the secure permanence of homes. Architecture is not just complicit in these definitions. It is the embodiment of them.

However, of course this is not the only tradition of building. There has always been portable and ephemeral architecture, traditionally represented by the dwellings of nomads. Traditional nomads engage in periodic and cyclical movement for specific purposes, at defined times and across particular territories, dictated by climate, vegetation, and the habits of animals that they rear or hunt. Thus home, for the nomad, requires individual engagement with a much broader territory than for the sedentary. Dwelling either requires the constant construction of shelter, the periodic occupation of seasonal buildings or the development of mobile architecture. A nomadic definition of home has thus always been at odds with the permanently settled one.

The nomad's lack of allegiance to artificial boundaries, states or nations has always made them deeply suspect in the eyes of the settled and the landowning. This suspicion of the nomadic persists in contemporary societies, embodied in the stigma of vagrancy. The idea of homeless people offends many not through their empathy towards those unfortunate enough to be without a home, but because the presence of the mobile, the unplaced, is deeply disturbing to the settled. The homeless threaten the security of those with homes, in that they do not respect the sanctity of ownership or boundaries. They are dirty not because they have no place to wash, but because they are considered in Mary Douglas'

definition to be *matter out of place* (1996: 35). This sense of place and ownership haunts discussions of belonging and home, implying that home has a specific and permanent place, and being outside that place – especially by choice – implies a rejection of home. It would appear that in the battle between the settled and the nomadic, the settlers have won the linguistic as well as the physical battle.

Yet do we not live in a world of unprecedented connectivity, in which it is possible to be virtually anywhere in the world and be instantaneously in communication with anywhere else? Have globalized economy and air travel not dissolved the old boundaries of ethnicity and nation? Is the expatriate proof of the continued existence of the nomad, and not as a marginalized outsider?

The Expatriate in Time and Space – Scenes from Abroad

The figure of the nomad is certainly often invoked in discussions of expatriation, exemplified by organizations such as Global Nomads International (Global Nomad Virtual Village, 2006). A major difference between expatriates and traditional nomads is that expatriates operate as individuals. While they may share employment and leisure pursuits with others from time to time, expatriates are singular in their ambitions and trajectory through life. Unlike migrants or refugees, they are defined not by what they are doing, *migrating*, or seeking *refuge*, but by what they are outside. It is the ability to stay away from home that defines expatriates. They are literally people who have witdrawn allegiance from their *patriota* (fellow countrymen). They are singular and anti-communal. Therefore, expatriates arguably possess, in Giorgio Agamben's terms, *whatever being*, in that their singularity of identity comes from having agency in the contemporary world. Agamben suggests that what is important for the future is to come to a point where "being, as such, matters", whatever it is. "*Quodlibet ens* is not 'being, it does not matter which,' but rather 'being such that it always matters'" (Agamben, 1993: 1).

In this sense, *whatever being* is concerned with being in itself, in its own singularity, not in relation to its affiliations with ethnicity, religion or nation. Such singular being might be associated with ethnicity, religion or nation, but it cannot be reduced to it. However, *whatever being* does not mean an absence of affiliations. Belonging still exists, but it is not a condition of being. While Agamben identifies such singularity in different ways, it can be seen in the state of being an expatriate, who on the one hand is outside *patriota* and perhaps unable really to return to an archetypal home, but on the other hand is a privileged citizen of the world who is able singularly to come and go anywhere as he or she pleases. The singularity of expatriate interaction with environment means that each contingent and transient moment of their expatriation has a unique quality, and in the absence of a sense of home or belonging, it is the sum of these moments that makes up their *whatever being*.

Expatriates follow the flows of global commerce. Their movement may not be cyclical or communal, but it is resonant with traditional nomads' following of seasonal pastures. Like them, expatriates are always attuned to the wider world, as well as to their specific location. The difference is that this connection is mediated through technology. As Appadurai has noted, "a mobile and unforeseeable relationship between mass-mediated events and migratory audiences defines the core of the link between globalization and the modern" (1996: 4). As individuals,

expatriates regularly transcend the local and the global, being embedded in the globalized system of capital that nurtures their peripatetic existence. Their bodily location is connected through electronic media to other locations. Ex-*patriota*, they embody the privileged end of a mass of contemporary humanity for whom the limited notions of modernity promulgated by the nation-state have been long overtaken by their own individual connections and aspirations.

Krstic has argued that in a world of instantaneous virtual communication, the traditional desire for travel as a release from the "tyranny of place" has been made redundant. He suggests that physical movement merely replicates what has already been moved by communication systems many times, the lag of the actual body moving in space providing only a hint of what, in earlier times, would have been real steps into the unknown (2003: 25). This argument leads to a somewhat depressing entropic spiral into uniformity of experience, regardless of actual physical position on the globe. In such a world, a person is never quite in a place, but never quite free from place either. This sets up a challenge for architecture. How does it provide a sense of being *somewhere,* beyond the self-similar environments of Leach's *aesthetic cocoons*?

The answer may lie in closer examination of the expatriate bodies as they move around the globe ex-*patriota*. Expatriates do not move randomly. They develop networks of belongings and associations; connections between people, objects, memories and associations. Physical objects that travel with the expatriate – artworks, trinkets, furniture, souvenirs – can develop a talismanic significance as they provide physical points of reference. Such objects denote particular times and places, charting the expatriate's life trajectory by relating the present with other times and places. The role of memory in making such connections is crucial, and provides clues for architecture. As Alberto Pérez-Gómez says, architecture not only matters in such a shifting environment, but it also takes on added responsibility. It needs not just to offer comfortable dwelling but also to be itself *memorable,* both in the sense of having a space or form that can readily be *remembered*, and in being a repository of *memories* (2006: 3). Being memorable in both these senses requires being responsive to the mobile body of the expatriate and to the environment around that body. The reduction of material possessions to essentials can be a liberating thing, but also limiting, not so much in terms of the amount of possessions that can be carried, but the degree to which the uncertain terrain of home can be moved around like baggage.

Form, Memory and the Future of the City

Cities such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Jakarta, Tokyo and Bangkok provide some of the traditional haunts of Western expatriation. They also contain a great number of examples of informally creative responses to crowded urban environments. While many of these are not unique to Asia, the growing influence of Asia on the world means that developments in Asian cities have an importance beyond their particular cultures and geographies. The nature of the future city, as a contingent space in which the formal principles of planning and zoning are continually subverted by the weight of transitory humanity, correlates more clearly with the contemporary Asian metropolis than with the more orderly Western model.[1] As Lee and Lam note in their exploration of future cities in Hong Kong cinema, Asian cities seem to owe far less to the past than their European counterparts (2002: 113). The present generation of Asian city-dwellers is often the first to be

1. It is predicted that in the near future, twenty of the world's biggest cities will be in Asia (Mosquera, 2007: 24).

completely removed from the agrarian world of their ancestors and far more desirous of developing a new technologically advanced society than returning to their old one.

Future environments have been so often projected as having an Asian flavour that the Japanese academic and cultural critic Toshiya Ueno has used the term *techno-orientalism* to describe the position of East Asia in Western conceptions of the future (1996: 1). The science-fiction film *Blade Runner* is an early case in point:

> When the architect Lee Ho-yin saw the sci-fi thriller Blade Runner in the mid-nineties, he was surprised about the film reviews that he read. 'A gloomy vision of a big-city future' was the tenor of the American newspapers, because the film was set in dark alleyways between glittering skyscrapers, crowds of people pushed past vegetable stands and collections of disembowelled electrical appliances, raindrops fell from leaky canvas covers, flickering neon lights bathed the passers-by in greenish-grey light. And Lee Ho-yin thought to himself. Future? Vision? This is the future and I am living in it. It is called Hong Kong. (Hanig, 2004: 12)

This future (*Blade Runner* is set in a future Los Angeles) is portrayed as both exciting and threatening, demonstrating the fascination and the fear with which the West has greeted the growing power of East Asia, as well as the likelihood that its present condition does actually represent the future of the West. Films like *Blade Runner* allude to one remarkable aspect of Asian cities: the usage that can be made of the tiny spaces left over between buildings. Footpaths, laneways, railway embankments and other marginal locations are often covered with a huge variety of informal uses. Squatter housing squeezes next to railway lines and under bridges. Vendors and service providers occupy footpaths and laneways, sometimes to the point where the permanent buildings can hardly be seen at street level. One of the most distinctive and attractive features of Asian urban environments is the large number of food and drink vendors occupying the streets. Generally occupying mobile or demountable stalls, hawkers set up on footpaths, in alleyways, under bridges. Their structures are simple: a stand on which they prepare their fare, a glass-fronted cabinet to display ingredients, an umbrella for shade. Some provide rudimentary seating and tables and congregate to form small precincts in which several stalls offer a choice to prospective patrons (Fig. 5). In terms of the built environment, these are ephemeral structures, creating a transitory presence that at particular times of the day transforms their often nondescript surroundings into a cornucopia of sights, smells and tastes.

Gutierrez, Portefaix and Ruggeri (2005) and their collaborators have analyzed Hong Kong's compactable market booths. The structures of these booths are festooned with products, creating spaces that are ephemeral but rich with colour, movement and the noise of human activity. In Hong Kong, as elsewhere in Asia, the occupation of spaces can change during the course of the day. Some vendors will set up during daylight hours only to be replaced by different stalls each night, so the whole nature and purpose of a street or district will alter depending on the time of visit (Fig. 6).

Fig. 5


Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Temporary food vendors, Bandung, Indonesia. Photograph by David Beynon.

Fig. 6: Street market in Hong Kong. Photograph by David Beynon.

Another group taking a particular interest in this 'micro-urbanism' is Urban Flashes, a loose association of mainly East Asian architects who see the reality of the city as a patchwork of many micro-scale activities and situations in which most people are engaged, as both they and de Certeau (1998) would put it, in tactics rather than strategies, making the most of the limited space and resources at their disposal to make places (Chi, 2003: 18). Ti-Nan Chi, a Taiwanese architect and a leading figure of the group, relates the transience of Asian street life to Sun Tzu's classic Daoist military manual *The Art of War* (2002: 86). Feints, detours, deception and camouflage are all techniques used by those who make a living on the street in order to cope with the uncertainties of their daily existence. Spaces are appropriated and then vacated when necessary. The nature of the business or inhabitation is always mutable. Even within permanent structures, the nature of spaces changes according to the situation: businesses combine with dwellings, restaurants double as living rooms, and public and private spaces are demarcated by the time of day rather than by territorial boundaries.

Elsewhere in Asia, while the circumstances of settlement may be different, the incremental and tactical nature of much of what is constructed is comparable. While there are Asian cities in which the forces of centralized power have imposed a degree of physical and visual order, this is often subverted. In Jakarta, for instance, grand thoroughfares link the major state monuments. However, apart from these, the city has a shifting and disorientating physical presence, more like a conglomeration of compacted villages than a centrally planned and zoned entity.[2]

Similarly, Isozaki has described the "spatial/performative" rather than "material/constructive" nature of Japanese urban place, where meanings are contingent on events (2006: 66). Illustrative of this is the work of Kaijima, Tsukamoto and their colleagues in the Tokyo Institute of Technology and Atelier Bow-Wow. They have produced guidebooks to *pet architecture* (tiny buildings on marginal scraps of land) (Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tsukamoto Architectural Laboratory &

2. This phenomenon has been described as desakota or kampungkota (both Indonesian terms meaning village-city), indicating the dense but de-centralized mix of agricultural and (sub)urban uses that is characteristic of contemporary settlement patterns in Indonesia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia (McGee, 1991; Sihombing, 2001).

Atelier Bow-Wow, 2002) and *da-me* or "no-good" architecture (hybrid typologies such as a spaghetti stand-baseball batting centre, a railway bridge-shopping arcade, a taxi garage-golf driving range, a concrete plant-company housing block, a supermarket-driving school) (Kaijima, Kuroda & Tsukamoto, 2001).

They describe the kinds of "shamelessly" pragmatic buildings that, contrary to the impression given by architectural journals, actually predominate in Tokyo and other Japanese cities (Figs. 7 and 8). Furthermore, rather than bemoaning an urban environment full of such buildings, they look for ways in which their "shameless" character might lead to a better understanding of their urban environment.[3] As they see it, such practical interdependent solutions to the crowding and chaos of the city dissolve the categories of 'high' architecture in favour of a continuum between uses and building types. Instead of architecture, Kaijima *et al* prefer the term "environmental unit", suggesting that in the ingenuity of purpose and spatial usage embodied in these buildings, architecture operates within the context of the city on an individualized, singular level, in creatively using the gaps between and around the city's edifices and monuments (Kaijima *et al*, 2001: 8). Isozaki contends that this kind of architecture – with its meaning derived from signs, usage and transitory happenings – is increasingly commonplace everywhere in the contemporary world (2006: 68). Following on from this, Lash argues that orientating oneself in a contemporary environment of intermeshed real and virtual spaces makes traditional notions of city legibility less important, replaced by what he describes as *tactility* – the ability to connect in an immediate and individual sense to both locality and globalized forces (1999: 58).[4]


Fig. 7


Fig. 8

Fig. 7: 'Pet architecture' in Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan. Photograph by David Beynon.

Fig. 8: Da-me architecture in Osaka, Japan. Photograph by David Beynon.

These examples suggest a particular way of looking at the city. There is an absence in their discussions of any overarching order, aesthetic or otherwise. There is no sense that anything fundamental about the structure of the city is alterable by its inhabitants. The city just *is*, and must be negotiated like any other environment, with local knowledge about its resources and its dangers used tactically to allow comfortable inhabitation within it. Expatriates have certain advantages in such an environment. Their capital provides for a level of comfort and freedom

3. While Kaijima, Kuroda and Tsukamoto translate the term *da-me* as "no-good", they use the term "shameless" to describe in English the characteristics of the same buildings.

4. Lash connects this idea of tactility to the kinds of connections that he identifies in the traditional Japanese city, in which there is little of the hierarchically perspectival layout of the Roman, Baroque or modernist city. He argues that this tactility has a linguistic basis. He notes that there is not in the Japanese language a clear causal relationship between actions and events, but instead a topological relationship in which meaning is derived from connections within a shared context.

from the dangers likely to be suffered by many of the inhabitants of the buildings described by Gutierrez, Portefaix, Kaijima, Tsukamoto, Chi and others. However, they have the same ephemerality of tenure. Their connection with place is uncertain. They are ex-*patriota*, outside their 'natural' home. No matter how comfortable they may be in their adopted environment, they find it difficult to escape questions of origin and allegiance.

Architectural Implications – At Home or Adrift in the World?

> But fear not, urban nomad, the house of the future comes with you.
>
> The comforts of home are compactable and transportable, readily relocatable to your new work or recreational environment. (*AlsoCAN Architects* with *Multiplicity*, 1999a, 1999b)

Being at home ex-*patriota* thus requires a coexistence of three things. The first is the ability of a transitory abode to function as a repository of memories. The second is the ability to make use of the opportunities of any environment. The third is to develop a *whatever* singularity that cannot be entrapped by any one sense of belonging, that, paradoxically, is willing to risk being out of place to be at home anywhere. The Slinky House may not provide all of these, but it attempts

Fig. 9

Fig. 9: Nakagin Capsule Building, Ginza, Tokyo. Photograph by David Beynon.

to make connections between the body of the urban nomad, the broad environment of expatriate mobility, and the specific functional and aesthetic requirements of location (Fig. 9).

In a pragmatic sense, the Slinky House relates to other architectural attempts to achieve mobility, in particular the work of the Metabolists in Japan. Metabolism attempted to combine modernist ideals of technological advancement with notions of spatial and formal mutability that derived from Japanese traditions and contemporary conditions of rapid industrial development. Metabolist architecture combined infrastructural frames (containing circulation, structure and services) with autonomous modular units that, in theory, could be plugged into or removed from the frame as required by a changing society (Reynolds, 2001: 227). The living pods of Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Building, for example, could be reconfigured on other sites, as suggested by his own Karuizawa Capsule House (Kurokawa, 1991: 126; Stewart, 2002: 184).

Like a Metabolist pod, the Slinky House would also ideally be an ephemeral presence in any one location, though, as any observer of the history of Metabolist buildings would note, architecture's urge to permanence is not easily subverted. However, a key difference between the Slinky House and its Metabolist or other modernist antecedents is that it is *not* Utopian. The Slinky House accepts the city as it is.[5] It posits a relationship between expatriates and urbanity based neither on isolation, nor on the envisaging of a brave new world. Instead, it seeks to work on the level of the incremental. This response to the urban environment – while marked by the privileged status of their inhabitants – is akin to the tactical responses of other itinerant city dwellers (Mosquera, 2007: 23). Functionally it blurs the physical boundaries between home and work, though unlike the prevalent contemporary model that seeks to convert the home into a workplace, it appropriates the space adjacent to the workplace for dwelling. Apart from shelter, the building is intended to provide an armature that would allow its inhabitant to engage comfortably with the changing reality of its surrounding; to be memorable as well as providing an envelope for the transportation of memories. As an object-image, it mediates between architecture and more ephemeral aspects of urban life: street art, demountable stall or festive decoration. Expatriate living in the future is likely, in the author's view, to involve either physical isolation within secure enclaves of privilege or engaging tactically with the shifting context of the future megalopolis. The latter needs to remain an option.

5. The idea that the Slinky House would be able to support its building host (in ways that admittedly would take a lot of research and development) through water collection and the harvesting of solar energy was conceived within this context. If we were to seriously revisit the project in 2008, these aspects would be further developed.

References

Agamben, G. (1993). *The Coming Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

AlsoCAN Architects in conjunction with *Multiplicity* (1999a). 'Slinky House' competition submission.

AlsoCAN Architects in conjunction with *Multiplicity* (1999b). *Monument,* (29), 42-43.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Augé, M. (1995). *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chi, T.-N. (2002). Introduction: Tactic. In T.-N. Chi (Ed.), *Urban Flashes* (pp. 86-120). Taipei: Human Environment Group.

Chi, T.-N. (2003). Introduction to Micro-Urbanism. In N. Boyarsky & P. Lang (Eds.), *Urban Flashes Asia: New Architecture and Urbanism in Asia* (pp. 16-21). Chichester: Wiley.

de Certeau, M. (1998). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Global Nomad Virtual Village (2006). Retrieved April 21, 2008 from www.gnvv.org/AboutUs.htm

Gutierrez, L., Portefaix, V., & Ruggeri, L. (Eds.) (2005). *HK LAB 2: An Exploration of Hong Kong Interior Spaces*. Hong Kong: MAP.

Hanig, F. (2004). Neon Cities. In P. Bialobrzeski (Ed.), *Neontigers: Photographs of Asian Megacities* (pp. 12-17). Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz.

Home of the Future Competition (1999). *Architect Victoria,* (March), 12-13.

Isozaki, A. (2006). *Japan-ness in Architecture*. Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press.

Kaijima, M., Kuroda, J., & Tsukamoto, Y. (2001). *Made in Tokyo.* Tokyo: Kajima.

Krstic, V. (2003). About other Constructs and Spaces. In R. Kronenburg (Ed.), *Transportable Environments 2: Theory, Context Design and Technology* (pp. 25-31). London: Spon.

Kurokawa, K. (1991). *Intercultural Architecture: The Philosophy of Symbiosis*. Washington (DC): The American Institute of Architects Press.

Lash, L. (1999). *Another Modernity, A Different Rationality*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Leach, N. (2002). Urban Camouflage. In T.-N. Chi (Ed.), *Urban Flashes* (pp. 234-37). Taipei: Human Environment Group.

Lee, G., & Lam, S. (2002). Wicked Cities: The Other in Hong Kong Science Fiction. In Z. Sardar & S. Cubitt (Eds.), *Aliens R Us: The Other in Science Fiction Cinema* (pp. 111-33). London: Pluto.

McGee, T. (1991). The Emergence of Desakota Regions in Asia: Expanding a Hypothesis. In N. Ginsberg, B. Koppel & T. McGee (Eds.), *The Extended Metropolis: Settlement Transition in Asia* (pp. 3-35). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Mosquera, G. (2007). The Urban Revolution. In A. van Helmond & S. Michiels (Eds.), *Jakarta Megalopolis: Horizontal and Vertical Observations* (pp. 22-24). Amsterdam: Valiz.

Museum Victoria (1999). *Home of the Future Design Competition*. Melbourne: s.p.

Pérez-Gómez, A. (2006). Polyphilo's Thresholds: Alternatives for Nomadic Dwelling. In R. Kronenburg (Ed.), *Transportable Environments 3: Theory, Context Design and Technology* (pp. 2-9). London: Spon.

Reynolds, J. (2001). *Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sihombing, A. (2001). Drawing the City: Revealing People's Awareness of Kampungkota Jakarta. In *International Seminar on Urbanization in the Information Age: New Perspectives on the Transformation of Fast Growing Cities in the Pacific Rim* (pp. 6-4, 6-5). Depok: Universitas Indonesia.

Stewart, D. (2002). *The Making of a Modern Japanese Architecture: From the Founders to Shinohara and Isozaki* (Edition with New Preface). Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tsukamoto Architectural Laboratory and Atelier Bow-Wow (2002). *Living Spheres Volume 2: Pet Architecture Guide Book*. Tokyo: World Photo Press.

Ueno, T. (1996). Japanimation and Techno-Orientalism: Japan as the Sub-Empire of Signs. *Documentary Box*, 9.

From Far East to Middle East:
Revitalizing Metabolism

Tom Daniell

> While the architectural concept of metabolism can be viewed as essentially grounded in a linear conception of time and growth, wherein both the expression and the experiment are considered part of a fundamentally linear process, 'post-metabolism' suggests a non-linear conception of time, that is, the time of the eternal ruin. There are two primary points to be considered: the first refers to a linear, teleological time of growth; the second proposes a model of organic totality. Akira Asada (1997: 80)

The resemblance between Arata Isozaki's design for the Qatar National Library (Doha, designed 2000-2, under construction) (Fig. 1) and his earlier Clusters in the Air (Tokyo, designed 1960-2, unbuilt) (Fig. 2) project raises a number of issues relevant to regions currently undergoing intense architectural and urban development. The form of Isozaki's Qatar National Library is a deliberate echo of Metabolism, the short-lived 1960s Japanese avant-garde architectural movement with which Isozaki was peripherally involved. The library has a tree-like silhouette comprising a 100m-wide, 9m-high podium (intended to house the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Science and Natural History), standing on which are three 18m-wide and 120m-tall cylinders that act as vertical circulation routes. They support vast cantilevered platforms containing the five floors of the library, layered in order of increasing floor area: children's library, machine rooms, offices, closed stacks, open-stack reading rooms. The platforms project further out as they rise, to a maximum 68m cantilever for a total width of 170m. In his Clusters in the Air project, designed precisely four decades previously, Isozaki proposed an array of buildings with similar tree-like shapes: central "trunks" containing circulation and services, and "leaves" of cantilevered residential units. This was part of a series of projects developed by Isozaki in the early 1960s using what he called the "joint core" system, one of the most important and influential Metabolist concepts – although ironically Isozaki was never an official member of the movement.

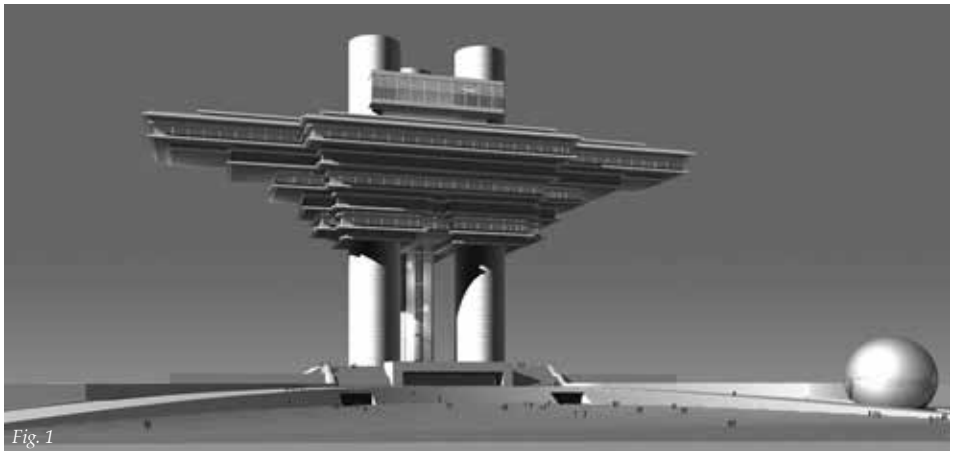


Fig. 1: Arata Isozaki, Qatar National Library, Doha, designed 2000-2 (under construction). Courtesy Arata Isozaki & Associates.

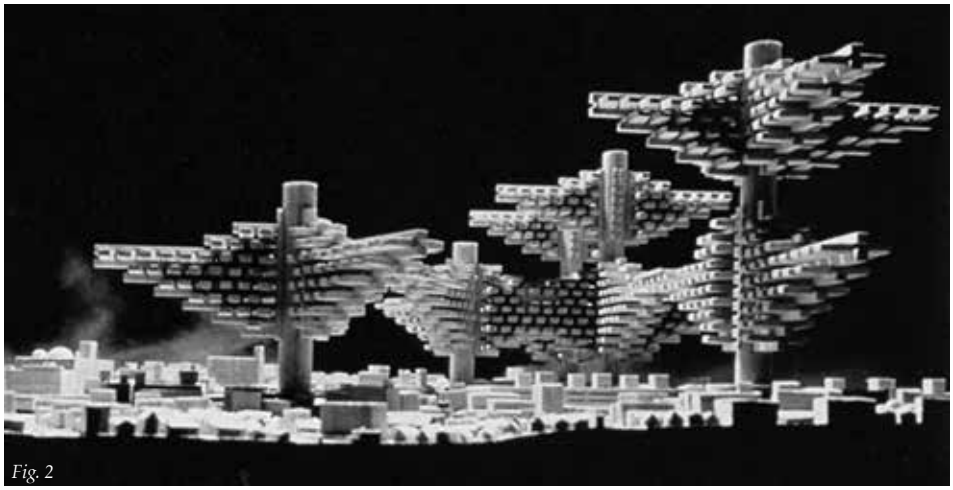


Fig. 2

Fig. 2: Arata Isozaki, Clusters in the Air, Tokyo, designed 1960-2 (unbuilt). Courtesy Arata Isozaki & Associates.

Mischievously labelled "the only non-white avant-garde in 3,000 years" by Rem Koolhaas (1995: 1044), Metabolism was conceived in response to the phenomenal, apparently unlimited, economic growth Japan underwent in the decades immediately after World War II. Attempting to harness and focus the effects of rapid urbanization and modernization, the Metabolists advocated building forms that could fluctuate and expand in response to their environments. The forms of Metabolism were clearly influenced by the megastructural projects then dominating global architecture discourse. Though the term megastructure is often employed to mean nothing more than 'very big building', it properly refers to a specific organizational type only incidentally related to scale: a rigid infrastructural frame supporting moveable (and potentially replaceable) modular spaces (Banham, 1976). The Metabolists extended the concept of megastructure, proposing buildings in which every element was to be replaced at longer or shorter intervals – that is to say, at differing metabolic rates. More of a shared sensibility than a coherent group, the four central architects were Kisho (then known as Noriaki) Kurokawa (1934-2007), Kiyonori Kikutake (1928-), Masato Otaka (1923-) and Fumihiko Maki (1928-). It was Kenzo Tange (1913-2005), their inspirational teacher and sometime employer, who produced the two seminal projects that bracket Metabolism's existence: Tokyo Plan 1960 (a proposal to extend the city out across Tokyo Bay) and the vast space-frame roof over the grounds of the 1970 Osaka Expo. Metabolism effectively existed for this one decade: officially launched at the 1960 World Design Conference in Tokyo, coinciding with the publication of the bilingual manifesto *Metabolism 1960: The Proposals for New Urbanism* (Kikutake et al, 1960), and unofficially moribund by the time of the 1970 Expo, which included a number of Metabolist design contributions. The technological fantasies presented at the Expo were seen by the Japanese public as painful revelations of shortfalls in the reality of life in postwar Japan (Yatsuka, 1981). Explicitly or implicitly rejecting their earlier proposals, the Metabolists went their separate ways, with only a handful of nominally Metabolist projects realized belatedly during the 1970s.

Ideologically, Metabolism regarded the production of buildings and cities as analogous to natural cycles of growth, decay and regeneration, entailing the constant replacement of parts. The 1960 manifesto begins:

> 'Metabolism' is the name of the group, in which each member proposes future designs of our coming world through his concrete

> designs and illustrations. We regard human society as a vital process – a continuous development from atom to nebula. The reason why we use such a biological word, the metabolism, is that, we believe design and technology should be a denotation of human vitality. We are not going to accept the metabolism as a natural historical process, but we are trying to encourage active metabolic development of our society through our proposals. (Kikutake et al, 1960: 5)

Despite ideological resonances with Archigram and their ilk (i.e. other architects who celebrated and instrumentalized impermanence), Metabolism was presented to the world as specifically Japanese, the outcome of a Buddhism-inspired philosophy of transience intimately in tune with the natural world: "As trees come out new buds, then fall down leaves, in accordance with the circulation of the four seasons, the living unit will belong together with the inhabitant's life" (Kikutake et al, 1960: 19). In a later essay, founding Metabolist member Noboru Kawazoe (1926-) implicitly connects Metabolism with the periodic reconstruction of Ise Shrine, a ritual that has been carried out intermittently since the seventh century and currently takes place every twenty years (Kawazoe, 1965). As architectural historian Jonathan Reynolds notes:

> Kawazoe cited Ise as a prime example of a tendency in Japanese building to perpetuate architectural form without undue concern for the preservation of the actual building itself. For Kawazoe this suggested an appreciation for the mutability of all things and the recognition that the practice of building should be attuned to natural processes. The ability to add new rooms without upsetting the order of the whole meant, conversely, that rooms could be removed at will. The design, one might say, had its own metabolism, which allowed it to keep pace with the cycles of life in Nature and society.… When Kawazoe described architecture maintaining its basic structure but regularly replacing materials (in a manner similar to the metabolic processes of a living creature) and adding or subtracting parts as needed, this was a clear expression of the core principles of metabolist theory. And by equating Japanese architectural practices with natural processes, Kawazoe could trump the seemingly mechanical or unnatural methods that predominated in the West. (Reynolds, 2001: 331)

The most emblematic of the Metabolist projects actually built in Japan is Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower (1972) (Fig. 3), which comprises a pair of concrete spines supporting steel containers hoisted by crane and bolted into place with the intention that they would be replaced at 25-year intervals. The techno-logy quickly became obsolete, and the building has never been altered, or even maintained – it has fallen into a sad state of disrepair, largely used as private storage, with piles of junk visible through the porthole windows. In 1996, DOCOMOMO (the international working party for the DOcumentation and COnservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the MOdern MOvement, a non-profit organization established in 1988) short-listed it for preservation as a World Heritage historical monument – surely the ultimate irony for this icon of mutable, regenerating architecture. In 2005, DOCOMOMO lost the battle at UNESCO, but negotiations continued between Kurokawa and the current owners of the building (a US hedge fund that bought out the Nakagin company) up until his death in October 2007. It is scheduled for demolition in 2009.

Fig. 3: Kisho Kurokawa, Nakagin Capsule Tower, Tokyo, 1972. Courtesy Kisho Kurokawa Architect & Associates.

Ultimately, the biological metaphors of Metabolism were more of a transitional polemical statement than a plausible design strategy – the built examples are scenographic rather than truly metabolic. Conceptually, Metabolism has far more applicability as an approach to urban planning than in the design of individual buildings. Though the proposals of the Metabolists comprised a serious attempt to deal with new conditions of urban growth predicated on unprecedented speed and unpredictable change, the magnitude of ambition ensured that no urban-scale Metabolist projects were ever commissioned.

Outside Japan, Metabolist ideas had a brief but significant influence in the Far East and the Middle East. Just as the modernization of Japanese cities was approaching a degree of stability, nations such as Korea, Malaysia and Singapore were beginning the same kinds of delirious development that had initially provoked the Metabolists. East Asian architects adapted Metabolist ideas in their own designs, and major projects in the Arab world attracted the involvement of Japanese Metabolists such as Kenzo Tange (Kuwait International Airport, an unbuilt Sports City in Kuwait), Kisho Kurokawa (Sarir Bedouin housing in Libya, an unbuilt Conference City in Abu Dhabi), and Kiyonori Kikutake (an unbuilt floating hotel in Abu Dhabi). In the mid-1990s, more than two decades after the disappearance of Metabolism as a vital presence in architectural discourse, Arata Isozaki was given the opportunity to confront and critique his earlier involvement through a commission for an urban project in China. The municipal government of Zhuhai (one of China's Special Economic Zones) approached Isozaki in 1993 with a proposal to develop the southern part of Hengqin Island, located in the South China Sea, into a centre for international exchange that would encompass

business, convention, cultural, scholastic, resort and residential facilities. Isozaki's response was a proposal for a new city on an artificial island off the coast of Hengqin Island, which, he says, can be seen as a "utopia, because a city on the sea evokes a world totally detached from contemporary political institutions and social conventions" (Asada & Isozaki, 1996: 25). Named Mirage City, or Haishi Jimua (in Chinese, *haishi* literally means 'sea city' but implies 'mirage'; the name is itself a reference to a poem by Song Dynasty Chinese poet Su Dongpo), it re-interprets Metabolist principles to create a new, ideal place on an empty site; that is, to produce a utopia. Like much of Isozaki's work, it is simultaneously a concrete proposal and a critical statement. An analysis of Isozaki's intentions warrants a brief examination of the history of utopian discourse as it relates to architecture.

Another Utopia

> Utopias afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. Michel Foucault (1994: xviii)

For the utopian architect, there is an implicit correlation between spatial and social structure, a relationship that the French philosopher Louis Marin has named "utopics" (Marin, 1990). Create a harmonious, ordered environment, and a harmonious, ordered society will inevitably follow. From the ideal cities of the Renaissance, inaugurated by Filarete's concentric, symmetrical plan for Sforzinda (1465), to the potentially infinite Cartesian grid of Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine proposal (1922), there is a consistent faith in the deterministic relationship between space and society: "Utopia is first and foremost a spatial organization designed for complete human dwelling, an activation of a sort of dwelling fantasy" (Marin, 1990: 203). In recent decades, visions of unification have become suspect; the hubris of the regimented urban fantasies of the modern movement is as embarrassing as it was once inspiring. Proponents of utopias are generally seen as engaging in naïve fantasy, or worse, latent totalitarianism.

Pre-seventeenth-century utopias were not prescriptions for social change but fine-tuned versions of the existing status quo. The classical architectural utopia was symmetrical, ordered, static, ahistorical – an ideal society operating in equilibrium. With society fixed in a perfect state, it was the individual who was required to adapt. By the nineteenth century, the situation was reversed. Utopias became radical rearrangements of society itself, only indirectly concerned with the individual. Addressing a speculative future rather than an idealized present, architectural utopias were understood to be dynamic, universal, and – most importantly – realizable. This shift occurred during the Enlightenment 'crisis of modernity'. For Enlightenment thinkers, the ideal society was one that had avoided contamination by Western civilization. Geographical isolation was the usual strategy: Sir Thomas More, originator of the term "utopia" with his 1516 treatise of the same name, placed it on a remote island discovered only by accident:

> From the time of More's book, Utopias have tended to begin with a travel, a departure and a journey, most of the time by sea, most of the time interrupted by a storm, a catastrophe which is the sublime way to open a neutral space, one which is absolutely different. (Marin, 1993: 14)

More initiated a literary genre in which – sheltered from the modern world, usually among the 'noble savages' of the South Pacific or the Americas – modern man could shed the accretions of culture and return to a 'natural' state.

> The ideal republic was effectively a 'pre-contact' society – i.e. one miraculously preserved from inclusion within the Western mono-culturalist orbit; and it was in this that it was able [to] represent that 'primitive' or essentially human quality that the classical mentality residually valourised: the inherently closed and arbitrary nature of human ideology. (Fausett, 1991: 16)

Utopian discourse was thus formulated as a commentary on, or critique of, Western expansion, with its concomitant processes of cultural assimilation and commercial exploitation. Yet the possibility of isolation evaporated almost as quickly as the concept was formulated. Geographical knowledge was effectively complete by the eighteenth century: the world map had no more blind spots, no more unknown lands, no more frontiers. Without the possibility of limitless territorial expansion, the world of independent cultures – each defined only in relation to some external, unknown 'other' – began to disappear, and the concept of utopia expanded from local to universal. As Jean Baudrillard puts it, with characteristic hyperbole, "When there is no more territory virgin and therefore available for the imaginary, when the map covers the whole territory, then something like a principle of reality disappears" (1983: 158). The classical utopia became inconceivable. There was no longer a localized culture to be perfected, only the future, universal utopia to be created.

Mirage City

> Sir Thomas More, who invented the original Utopia, set his imaginary place on an island discovered after a great voyage. Our artificial island will similarly be set in the sea, in our case, the South China Sea. The former was conceived in an age when people still believed in frontiers and the possibility of discoveries still existed, while our 'island' is a fictional construct fabricated on a sea where the possibility of discovery has been exhausted. Arata Isozaki (2001: 227)

Located at the western tip of the Zhu Jiang Kou (Pearl River Delta), Isozaki's Mirage City (a name that seems less than optimistic about its ultimate realization) is explicitly utopian, its ambitions humorously manifest in the form of the design itself. The island in More's *Utopia* was originally a peninsula, sliced away from the mainland then reconnected with bridges, and Mirage City is connected to Hengqin Island by two bridges that mimic the layout shown in the frontispiece to the second edition (1518) of the book.

Mirage City was conceived in collaboration with critic Akira Asada and developed by the Center for Science and Engineering at Waseda University. Isozaki used the commission to explore themes that have occupied him since the beginning of his career: growth, chance, collaboration, the dubious viability of any kind of deterministic urban planning and the notion of authorship itself. Mirage City (Figs. 4 and 5) is a metropolis without master plan in any conventional sense, intended to avoid the imposition of a singular, rigid vision. The desired indeterminacy is achieved by a process of layering in which each successive intervention reinforces, contradicts or subverts the preceding ones. Urban form

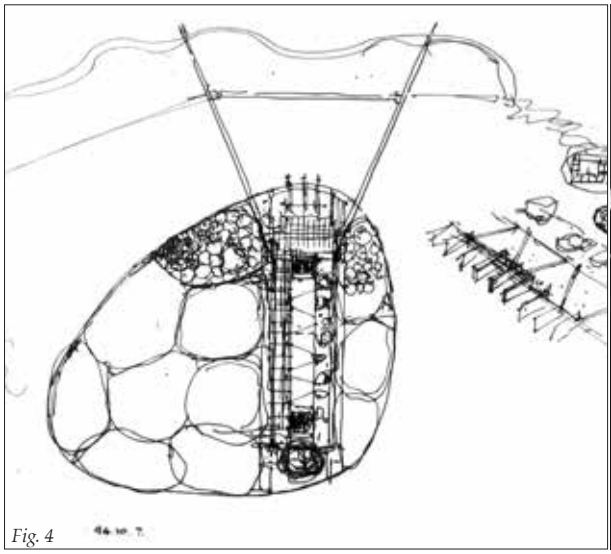


Fig. 4

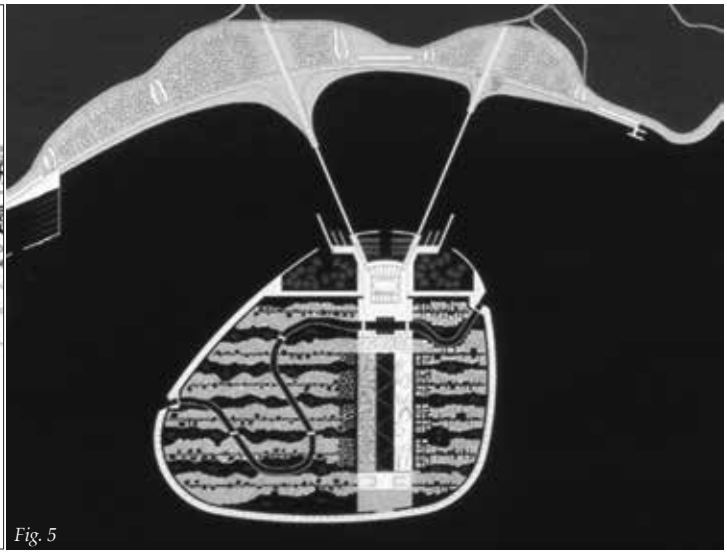


Fig. 5

Fig 4: Arata Isozaki, Mirage City sketches. Courtesy Arata Isozaki & Associates.

Fig. 5: Arata Isozaki, Mirage City computer image. Courtesy Arata Isozaki & Associates.

appears as a kind of interference pattern. Having established a basic functional zoning, Isozaki applied various techniques to create specificity and variety. Ranging from the traditional Chinese geomantic techniques of *feng shui* to experimental environmental technologies, some of these overlays are based on economic or contextual issues while others are entirely arbitrary. In one version, feeding a diagram of church locations in Venice through a computer-based genetic algorithm created a pattern of building density. In another, giving randomly scattered particles mutually attractive properties proportional to their size transformed them into a web of vectors usable as a layout of streets and plazas.

Isozaki exhibited a preliminary version of the project at the 1996 Venice Biennale, and then expanded it to become the inaugural exhibition of the NTT Inter-Communication Center gallery in Tokyo (April 19 to July 13, 1997) (Fig. 6). It was a test of the limits of indeterminacy and randomness in the design process: visitors were invited to modify the exhibits physically, while twelve guest architects and artists also added their own layer to the island, working directly in the gallery on duplicates of the main model. Perhaps the most radical contribution was from Diller + Scofidio (collaborating with DBOX and Lyn Rice), who infested the plan with drugs, gambling, piracy, prostitution – every undesirable (or 'dystopian') activity conceivable. It was built on the reverse side of the model, metaphorically the grimy underbelly of paradise. Forty-eight international architects were directly invited by Isozaki to independently place their own projects in Mirage City as part of an internet component of the exhibition; the site boundaries were created by superimposing a portion of the figure-ground composition of Piranesi's famous *Campo Marzio of Ancient Rome* (1762) onto the profile of the island. The invited architects either created new conceptual works or, more often, simply provided current projects from their offices. Without any realistic relationship to the Zhuhai municipal government's requirements, the process was an attempt to foster dialogue and collaboration as architects on adjacent sites negotiated their respective boundaries, smoothing the initial *cadavre exquis*. The Mirage City plan was also freely available on the internet, and design ideas sent via email were incorporated in the exhibition. As Isozaki strayed from the original commission, he called into question its underlying premises.

Fig. 6

Fig. 6: Arata Isozaki, Mirage City exhibition, NTT InterCommunication Center gallery, Tokyo, 1997. Courtesy NTT InterCommunication Center.

For Asada, and perhaps for Isozaki himself, the conceptual base of the project is an update of 1960s Metabolism. Indeed, Mirage City has obvious similarities to Kenzo Tange's Metabolist urban plan for Tokyo Bay – an intense, dynamic programmatic mixture placed on reclaimed land and connected to the mainland by bridge infrastructure. Conceived within, and predicated on, the accelerating modernization, urbanization and economic growth of Japan's spectacular recovery from wartime devastation, the weakness of the original Metabolist projects lay in their reliance on megastructural principles – that is, the requirement for an enormous (size, cost, risk) fixed framework into which the various flexible components were to be plugged. The initial investment could never be returned, as technological advances would eliminate the benefits of modifying the existing architecture (as with Kurokawa's Nagakin Capsule Tower). Attempts at biological complexity were frustrated by the near impossibility of conscious design activity replicating natural processes of growth and evolution, a point convincingly argued in Christopher Alexander's 1965 essay *A City is not a Tree*. At a diagrammatic level, Metabolist designs were limited to essentially treelike structures:

> While metabolism intended to radicalize function, its structural model was the organic whole, based on a hierarchy – stem (or spinal cord), branch, leaf, organ, cell. No matter how complex metabolist projects seem, this hierarchical schema of the organic whole can be easily detected behind that complexity. (Asada, 1997: 64-65)

Asada believes that Mirage City adumbrates the possibility of a contemporary, reinvigorated Metabolism. Borrowing terminology from the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, he distinguishes a new "molecular" Metabolism from the earlier "molar" Metabolism – the former implying a non-hierarchical, rhizomatic interlinkage, and the latter implying a treelike, branching structure. Isozaki's own suspicion of the underlying rigidity of Metabolist

designs, and indeed of any design method with a single author, has been present from the beginning of his career. His contribution to the 1962 Metabolist exhibition Mirai no Toshi to Seikatsu (Cities and Lifestyles of the Future), held at the Seibu department store in Tokyo, clearly prefigures the 1997 Mirage City exhibition. Entitled Incubation Process, it comprised a supply of hammers, nails and coloured wire next to a huge aerial photo of Tokyo. "Observers were asked to drive nails wherever they liked into the photograph and other people were then asked to connect those nails with wires as they saw fit" (Isozaki, 2004: 118). By the end of the exhibition period, the entire space was a massive tangle of wires, over which Isozaki symbolically poured plaster:

> A new incubation process begins with the engulfment and destruction of a city of virtue and ease by viscous, formless matter welling up from the earth.... The task we are fated to undertake is to give dynamic order to formless matter. (Isozaki, 2001: 46)

Comparing the two exhibitions, held 35 years apart, he writes:

> The city was once assembled by hand. Now it is visualized using electronic media. However the process is the same: a city that is not the product of intellectual decisions by some single controlling body inevitably becomes a complex system and form. (Isozaki, 2001: 260)

Fig. 7

Fig. 7: Arata Isozaki, Incubation Process (detail), Cities and Lifestyles of the Future exhibition, Seibu department store gallery, Tokyo, 1962. Courtesy Arata Isozaki & Associates.

In both cases, Isozaki attempted to destabilize authorship – that is, to simultaneously disempower the putative designer (himself) and enfranchise as many other participants as possible – as a critique of the totalizing vision that inevitably causes utopian order to devolve into disciplined tyranny.[1]

The Gulf

> Sand and sea along the Gulf, like an untainted canvas, provide the ultimate tabula rasa on which new identities can be inscribed: palms, world maps, cultural capitals, financial centers, sports cities.... Rem Koolhaas (2007: 7)

A great deal has been written in recent years about the speed and ostentation of architectural and urban developments in the Gulf region. In a matter of decades, entirely new cities have emerged from the desert, extending vertically in clusters of discordant tower profiles as they simultaneously spread into the water on surreal artificial islands. These extraordinary juxtapositions of built form are largely inhabited by a population in flux – tourists, guest workers, transients and mercenaries outnumber the 'natives.' As in Las Vegas, modern technologies and practically unlimited funds have transformed barren desert into fertile ground for utopian fantasies.

The sheer speed, quantity and quality of construction underway in the Gulf would seem to provide an ideal laboratory for testing urban planning principles that do not rely on fixed master plans, but place emphasis on channelling the energy and volatility already at work. Indeed, following the initial Metabolist forays into the Gulf during the 1960s and 70s, many of the conceptual propositions embedded in Mirage City are being realized here, albeit in debased, thoughtless ways. By evoking the Metabolist "joint core" system and the profile of Clusters in the Air, Isozaki's design for the Qatar National Library might be seen as an optimistic gesture, a symbolic replanting of the dormant concepts of Metabolism in fertile ground. However, Isozaki admits that the impetus to recycle the design came from his client, the Emir of Qatar:

> The Emir looked in my book and pointed at a project. 'I like it. I want something like this.' It was Clusters in the Air, my project from the early 60s. The huge columns of vertical infrastructure look as if big tree trunks were growing branches and leaves out in the air. I said, 'No, no, this is my student time project.' The Emir said, 'It doesn't matter.' It became the National Library. I didn't mind developing an idea for a seemingly mismatched condition. (Isozaki in Reisz & Ota, 2007: 113)

Clearly reminiscent of Metabolism in form, it is diametrically opposed in intent: the library is a predetermined, static object rather than a contingent manifestation of dynamic, free processes. Spectacular and iconic, it will become merely one more idiosyncratic tower on the Gulf skyline.[2] The Clusters in the Air project was intended as a forest, not a single tree: a multiplicity defined by complex interconnectivity, not a particular built profile. Similarly, Mirage City is not about the composition, but about the process – about communication, collaboration, and interaction between architects and thinkers worldwide.

The value of Metabolism and its contemporary reinterpretations does not lie in their forms, or at least not in their forms alone. The displacement of Metabolism

1. Although serious efforts were made to solicit developers and investors, the Mirage City project has quietly faded away. Since 2005, the Las Vegas Sands Corporation has been negotiating with the Zhuhai municipal government on their own utopian master plan for Hengqin Island, currently known as the Venetian Hengqin International Convention and Resort Project – accidentally and ironically continuing Isozaki's Venice theme.

2. To be fair to Isozaki, a singular, monumental form is justifiable for a significant cultural facility, and elsewhere in Doha he has invited a wide range of international architects to contribute to his master plan for the ongoing Education City project (a multi-university campus on a 14-square kilometre site on the outskirts of the city), thereby enabling the possibility of architectural serendipities as well as conflicts.

from an indigenous Japanese phenomenon to a globalized method highlights the failure of a utopian image (as with the Qatar National Library), yet evinces the critical potential of a utopian process (as with Mirage City). Whereas the classical utopia is predicated on isolation from the rest of the world and the modern utopia is intended to transform the entire world, Mirage City is based on an awareness of the impossibility of either position. A desire for a self-imposed quarantine from the negative effects of modernization – though combined with an unwillingness to relinquish any of its benefits – thus reanimates the classical utopia in a contemporary form. Neither remote, reactionary Arcadia nor global, gleaming Technopolis, Mirage City is isolated yet integrated, in a kind of conditional surrender to globalization. The barrier to implementing earlier forms of utopia – the perfect society, the ideal city, the ultimate ideology – is the requirement for a more-or-less stable group of inhabitants who will take on the social form implied by the urban form. Marin argues that any utopian proposal acts as a perfected version of an existing community and simultaneously a critical commentary on that community. Mirage City's fluctuating plan presupposes a population of global nomads, perpetual change: the constant flow of people as energy source, and community itself as mirage. If Isozaki had been successful, Mirage City might have been a truly 'other' place – perhaps no utopia but surely, to use Foucault's term, a "heterotopia" (Foucault, 1986).

Ultimately, all planning is utopian in intent. To design without believing you are improving the world in some way, however small, would be intolerably cynical. Isozaki's promiscuous hybridization of the design process is radically yet realistically utopian. By revitalizing and relocating Metabolism, he presents an expatriated architectural methodology ideally suited to expatriate inhabitants, the deliberate dilution of its local, cultural and authorial aspects producing results of far greater robustness.

References

Alexander, C. (1986 [1965]). A City is not a Tree. In M. Feher & S. Kwinter (Eds.), *Zone 1/2* (pp. 128-149). New York: Zone Books.

Asada, A. (1997). Emerging Complexities. In B. Tschumi (Ed.), *D: Columbia Documents of Architecture and Theory* (Vol. 6, pp. 80-84). New York: Columbia University Press.

Asada, A., & Isozaki, A. (1996). Haishi Jimua. In C. Davidson (Ed.), *Anywise* (pp. 24-31). New York: Anyone Corporation.

Asada, A., & Isozaki, A. (1997). From Molar Metabolism to Molecular Metabolism. In C. Davidson (Ed.), *Anyhow* (pp. 64-73). New York: Anyone Corporation.

Banham, R. (1976). *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Baudrillard, J. (1983). *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext(e).

Fausett, D. (1991). Two Visions of Utopia. *Interstices: A Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, (1), 11-20.

Foucault, M. (1986). Of Other Spaces. *Diacritics*, *16*(1), 22-27.

Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage.

Isozaki, A. (Ed.). (1997). *kaishi/haishi: The Mirage City – Another Utopia*. Tokyo: NTT Publishing.

Isozaki, A. (2001). *Hankenchikushi [Unbuilt]*. Tokyo: Toto Publishing.

Isozaki, A. (2004). Incubation Process. *GA Document Special Issue Arata Isozaki*, (77), 118-19.

Kawazoe, N. (1965). The Ise Shrine and Its Cultural Context. In K. Tange & N. Kawazoe (Eds.), *Ise: Prototype of Japanese Architecture* (pp. 165-206). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kikutake, K., Kawazoe, N., Maki, F., Ohtaka, M., & Kurokawa, N. (1960). *Metabolism 1960: The Proposals for New Urbanism*. Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha.

Koolhaas, R. (1995). Singapore Songlines: Thirty Years of Tabula Rasa. In R. Koolhaas & B. Mau (Eds.), *S, M, L, XL* (pp. 1008-89). Rotterdam: 010 Publishers.

Koolhaas, R. (2007). Last Chance? *Volume: Al Manakh,* (12), 7.

Marin, L. (1990). *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces* (R. A. Vollrath, Trans.). Amherst: Humanity Books.

Marin, L. (1993). Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present. *Critical Inquiry*, *19*(3), 397-420.

Reisz, T., & Ota, K. (2007). Gulf Survey. *Volume: Al Manakh,* (12), 70-373.

Reynolds, J. M. (2001). Ise Shrine and a Modernist Construction of Japanese Tradition. *Art Bulletin*, *LXXXIII*(2), 316-41.

Yatsuka, H. (1981). A Critical Introduction to Japanese Architecture after Modernism. *Oppositions,* (23), 3-35.

Nomadic Urbanism:
The Senior Full-time Recreational Vehicle Community

Deane Simpson

The author would like to thank Marc Angélil, Eyal Weizman, Jörg Stollmann, Jesse LeCavalier and Ida Richter Braendstrup for their comments and criticism related to this research. The research was supported by The Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction and an ETH Zurich Research Grant TH-24 07-2 (TH-Project).

This paper frames the spatial practices of a particular contemporary social formation in the United States. While little in the way of official governmental statistics exist for the senior full-time recreational vehicle community (SFTRVC), this so-called 'nomadic' society is conservatively estimated to number between two and three million retirees who have relinquished their sedentary homes and lifestyles for a continuous year-round life 'on the road'[1] (Fig. 1). While nomadic communities are not a new occurrence, it will be suggested that one of this scale, sophistication and level of connectivity is unprecedented.

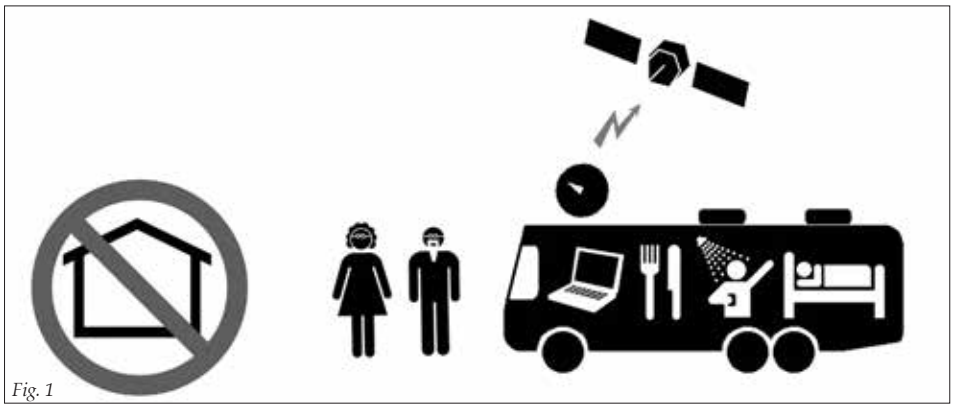


Fig. 1

Fig. 1: RV Urbanism.
Source: Deane Simpson.

Historically, nomadic societies have been defined in dialectical opposition to sedentary urban ones. In the preeminent historical text on nomadism, *The Muqaddimah*, medieval social historian Ibn Khaldun describes the two fundamentally opposed environments from which all human cooperation and social organization developed: a) the desert life of nomadic tribal societies; and b) the sedentary life of towns and agricultural villages. For Khaldun, "the very nature of [nomadic] existence is the negation of building, which is the basis of civilization" (1967 [1377]: 118). Nomadic societies therefore have been structurally defined as anti-urban, representing a mobile 'other' functioning outside of the heirarchical construction of sedentary urban society and the state apparatus. Within this context, it will be suggested that the practices of the SFTRVC problematize this opposition.

The practices of the SFTRVC exceed conventional classifications of pure nomadism by, firstly, embracing nomadic mobility as a leisure activity rather than one practised for subsistence and, secondly, operating with a high degree of instantaneous and uninterrupted connectivity across a scale not previously typical of nomadic societies. The practices of the SFTRVC exceed typical anti-urban

1. The full-time senior RV community "present[s] a familiar problem to researchers and statisticians: a moving target, dissolving and reforming, traveling in scattered bands and hard to distinguish from their semi-nomadic counterparts" (Grant, 2003: 286).

categorizations of nomadism by operating as a physically spread, but densely connected social field, one that holds the potential to produce instant bottom-up formations of actual physical urban density. Rather than producing urbanity with its most common building block (built fabric), the SFTRVC constructs it through an urbanism of infrastructure consisting of two overlaid networks, one physical and one non-physical.

The SFTRVC and its associated practices do not operate as a purely anti-urban phenomenon. Rather, they lead to a collision of the most urban and the most anti-urban of conditions, suggesting an alternate spatial model that could be provisionally termed *nomadic urbanism*. This paper refers to contemporary and historical models and theories related to both nomadism and urbanism. It is presented through the actions *homemaking, touring, communicating, plugging in, clustering, squatting, infrastructuring, pioneering, escaping, imagining* and *evolving*. Each describes a particular aspect of SFTRVC spatial practice.

Based predominantly on field investigations undertaken in a recreational vehicle, this research has also involved interviews with SFTRVers, membership in RV and SFTRVC clubs, online participation in SFTRVC forums and on-site aerial photography.[2]

Homemaking: On the Road

A recreational vehicle – or RV as it is commonly known in the US – is a "vehicle that combines transportation and living quarters for travel, recreation and camping … [an RV will typically] provide kitchen, sleeping, and bathroom facilities and be equipped with the ability to store and carry fresh water and sewage" (RVIA, 2006)[3] (Figs. 2 and 3).

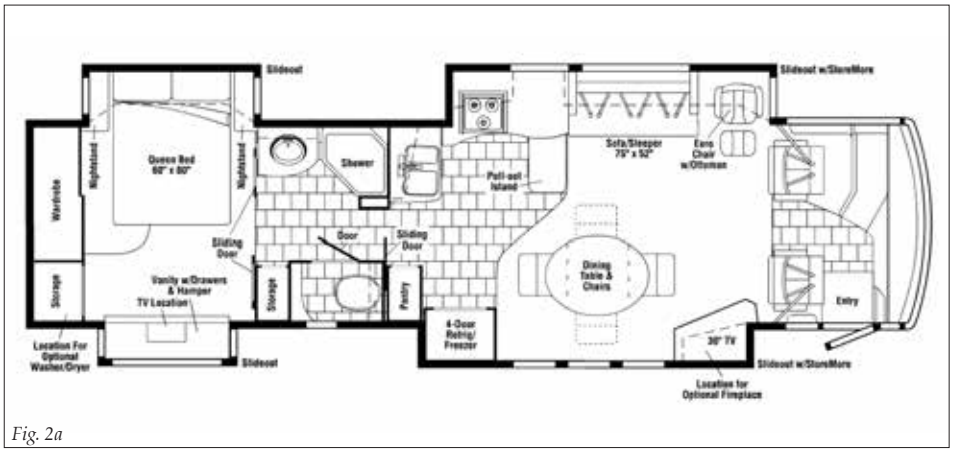


Fig. 2a

Fig. 2b

Fig. 2a,b: RV motorhome floor plan and interior. Source: Winnebago Industries Inc.

2. Existing documentation on the spatial practices of this specific community is relatively limited, particularly within urban and architectural discourse. This research attempts to address this 'opening'. Documentation to date is mostly limited to an ethnography of RVing seniors in North America by the Canadian anthropologists Dorothy and David Counts (1996). This publication is of particular use because it resulted from extensive research into specific sociological and demographic aspects outside of this author's expertise. While the Counts & Counts work broadly describes the background, motivations and social practices of the lifestyle, it is limited in terms of critical investigation of the spatial/urban practices of the community. In addition to Counts & Counts, Varnelis (2007) offers an interesting analysis of the town of Quartzsite with reference to Negri and Hardt's *Multitude*.

3. For a history of the RV, see White (2000).

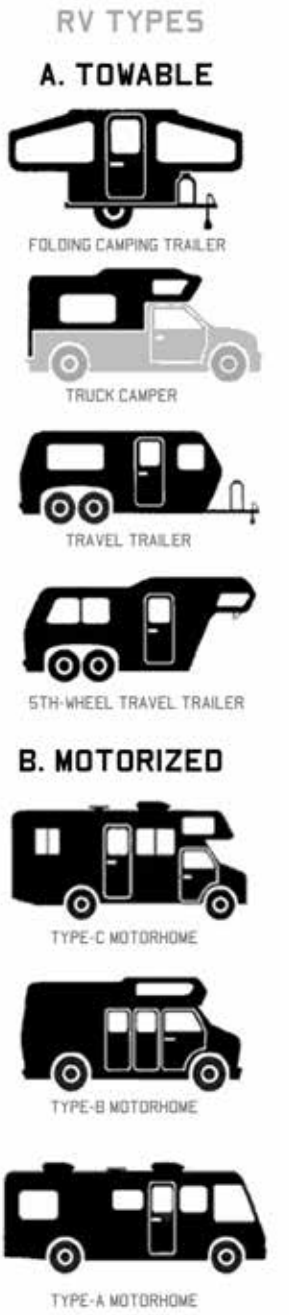


Fig. 3

Fig. 3: RV types. Source: RVIA.

RV enthusiasts are typically divided into three categories: *vacationers, snowbirds* and *full-timers. Vacationers* spend the majority of their time in an owned or rented sedentary residence, and vacation in an RV for a period typically numbering in weeks. *Snowbirds* maintain a sedentary residence, in which they typically reside during the summer months, travelling south in an RV in the winter months. *Full-timers* relinquish their sedentary residence, adopting a full year-round nomadic lifestyle. The vast majority (approximately 80 percent) of the two-to-three million *full-timers* in the US are both elderly and retired (Counts & Counts, 1996: 148). The community of *full-timers* – retired third-agers whose only 'home' is the RV they travel in – constitutes the focus of this paper.[4]

Particular tendencies emerge in the process of permanently making one's home 'on the road'. Compressing the former suburban home often into a fraction of its original size suggests the need for drastic spatial recomposition. Objects of weight and bulk that typically play an important representational function in the original domestic home – such as furniture pieces, books and paintings – are replaced by more compact built-in elements. However, it is common to observe an exaggerated quality of domesticity in the interiors, as if to counteract potential feelings of constant displacement or homelessness. This is evident in the material and colour palettes, along with the layout and designated function of 'rooms'. Familiar aspects include carpets, tiles, upholstery fabric, and stained oak or mahogany wood-veneer panelling in the 'kitchen', as well as the constant refurbishing and replacing of interior ornaments such as cushions, flowers and small tchachkas that are stowed in transit.

A similar phenomenon occurs in the immediate external surroundings of the parked RV, where semi-private, semi-public and public spaces are consciously demarcated. This occurs through the positioning of the RV in relation to existing site objects and constraints such as sun orientation, trees and other vehicles, and the placement of particular objects and furniture. Most vehicles have a retractable awning that can be extended to produce a domestic verandah, a semi-private space that is usually reinforced through ground surfacing practices. This surface is typically a green artificial turf – mimicking the domestic lawn – upon which is often placed a doormat, foldable tables and chairs. Additional items such as barbeques, fireplaces, potted plants, exercise equipment, whirligigs, neon palm trees and garden gnomes personalize and demarcate the extent of the exterior domesticated space of the home. Semi-public spaces are often produced through the cooperation of more than one RV, the focal point of which is typically a campfire, particularly in informal camping areas. These particular practices suggest that while SFTRVers relinquish their sedentary house (or apartment), the notion of 'home' is consciously amplified.

Touring: The Leisure Nomad

Historically, there are three broad categories of nomadism: *hunter-gatherers*, *pastoral nomads* and *peripatetic nomads*. SFTRVers function in a similar fashion to these three forms inasmuch as they do not reside in a 'fixed' sedentary dwelling, instead moving from place to place on a predominantly seasonal basis.[5] Importantly, however, as they do not rely on nomadic behaviour for subsistence or survival, but take part in it by choice, as a leisure-oriented lifestyle, SFTRVers suggest the necessity for a fourth category of nomadism: *leisure nomads*.

4. The SFTRVC consists of individuals from a wide range of socio-demographic segments, but those living this lifestyle have been categorized as predominantly middle class, most of whom formerly lived in suburban or exurban areas (Counts & Counts, 1996: 283, 315).

5. See Barfield (1993: 12).

The leisure-oriented lifestyle of the SFTRVC is a product of the institution of retirement, creating a subject distinct from both Torstein Veblen's idle wealthy of the late nineteenth century and Dean MacCannell's mass tourists of the late twentieth century. The Social Security Act of 1935, entitling Americans over 65 years of age to financial support from the state, was designed both as a benefit for those 'too old to work' and an incentive for the ongoing replacement of 'obsolete' workers. It led, over the years in which the average life expectancy has risen drastically and the population has aged accordingly, to "the emergence of a large (and potentially vast) social group whose daily experiences do not consist of work or schooling – at least, not in the traditional sense of socialization for work – and who, crucially, can expect to live up to a third of their lives in this state" (Blaikie, 1999: 69).

The emergence of the new third age overlaps with the process the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992) calls *individualization*: the social transformation occurring in Western countries in recent decades in which dominant traditional social hierarchies have become increasingly subordinated to individual choice and freedom.[6] Similarly, it is the possibility of freedom, independence and adventure that attracts SFTRVers to their lifestyle. This suggests a radically different basis for constructing a nomadic practice, producing a form of distributed leisure space, one aligned to the logic of full-time tourist rather than the traditional survivalist logic of the pastoral nomad or hunter-gatherer. The tour in this case is based both around sites of a conventional touristic nature and kin- and peer-based social interactions.

Descriptions of the spatial practices of nomads by social historians and anthropologists such as Khaldun (1967 [1377]), Jabbur (1995) and Barfield (1993) and theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari (1986) are relatively consistent. The nomad functions according to a territorial occupation of space rather than one that is codified, divided and controlled. Nomadic space is characterized by the dominance of the trajectory of movement (pathway or line) over the importance of destination (node or fixed point). For the nomad, the space between points is critical. Points are secondary – inasmuch as a point is arrived at only to be left behind. This functions in contrast to sedentary space that privileges the fixed point over the line. This is no more evident than in the SFTRVer disease known as 'Hitch Itch', or what would be referred to clinically as *dromomania* (an abnormal, obsessive desire to roam.)

The nomad plays a key role in Deleuze and Guattari's discourse as a subject who resists the forces of the territorializing apparatus of the sedentary state. The emblematic space of this nomad is the desert, defined by characteristics rather than borders, in contrast to the divided and striated space of sedentary territory. They describe the function of the sedentary road, "which is to parcel out a closed space to people, assigning each person to a share and regulating the communication between shares. The nomadic trajectory does the opposite, it distributes people (or animals) in an open space, one that is indefinite and noncommunicating" (1986: 50). In addition to this non-communicating aspect of nomadic space, it is the limitation of communication between the dispersed individuals and factions of nomadic societies (communication that typically took place through serial chains)[7] that is challenged by the contemporary leisure nomad.

6. See also the excellent description of similar social transformations related to retirement migration on the Spanish coast by Andreas Huber and Karen O'Reilly (2004).

7. From an overview of literature on early nomadic societies (see References, especially, Carmichael (1991); Cresswell (1997); Khaldun (1967 [1377])), social communication might best be described in terms of serial chains.

Fig. 4

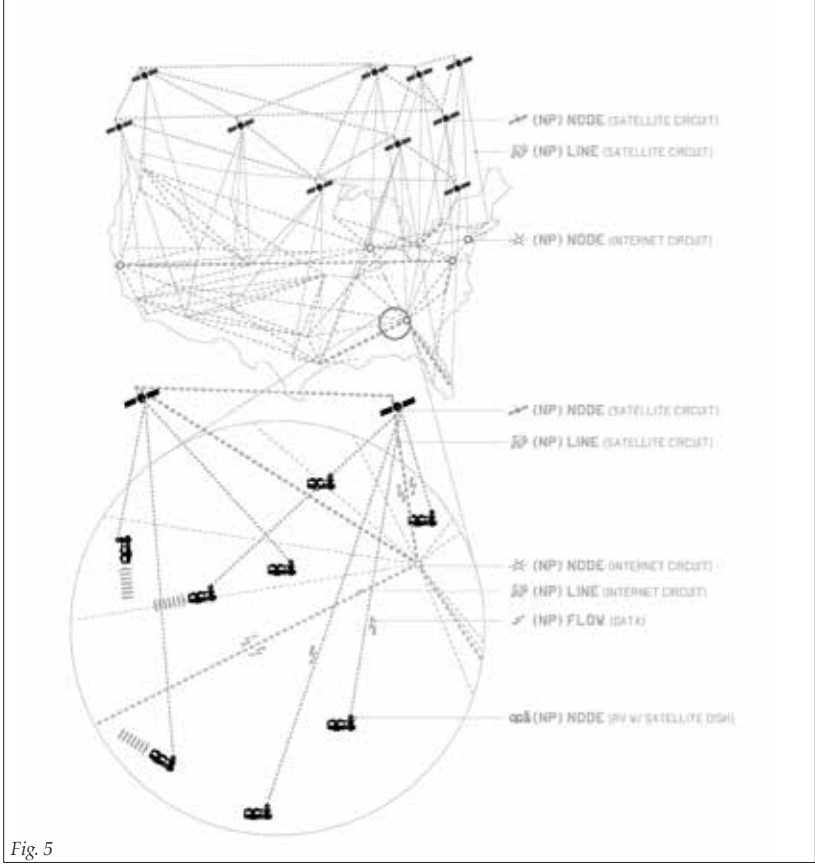


Fig. 5

Fig. 4: RV satellite dishes for TV and two-way internet. Quartzsite, 2008. Photograph by Deane Simpson.

Fig. 5: RV non-physical network. Source: Deane Simpson.

Communicating: Satellite Internet

Portable satellite internet technologies – developed initially for military purposes – have in recent years become available in a civilian context, supporting an unprecedented level of communication and interconnectivity for the SFTRVC in real time (Fig. 4). This communication system – constituted as an infrastructural network that is predominantly non-physical in nature – consists of two main elements: the mobile RV-based communication equipment (computer and two-way satellite internet dish and box) in which each moving vehicle operates as a node or point, and the series of circuits or lines of communication, in particular the web-based RV club sites and the internet that supports them (Fig. 5).

On-board RV communication equipment is increasingly sophisticated and remarkably widely used amongst the SFTRVC. With a satellite dish mounted to an RV, a user is able to access the internet from any remote location in the US with a view toward the southern sky.

In recent years, the dominant staging area of RV communities – typically known as RV clubs – has become the internet. Clubs, as one of the central aspects of the RV lifestyle, not only organize yearly or seasonal rallies and conventions but also keep members in close communication through newsletters and magazines. Many clubs supply parking spaces and some redirect mail. Clubs have increasingly cemented a web-based presence with forums, chatrooms and info sites. Forums, for example, offer support on travel itineraries, technical issues, buying and selling RVs, RVer dating, RV friendly recipes, discount RV merchandise, security tips, rallies, conventions and more. The largest and best known RV community is the Good Sam Club, with a 2006 membership of over one million RVers. Founded in 1966, it publishes *Highways* magazine and has a considerable web presence (at www.goodsamclub.com). Escapees (www.escapees.com) is one of the first RV clubs exclusively for SFTRVers (Fig. 6). It was founded in 1978 and in 2008 has over 100,000 members.

Rather than suggesting that the internet led to the invention of this form of nomadism, it is proposed here that the commercial availability of portable

satellite internet systems has expanded instantaneous and remote communication to and from nomadic vehicles, leading to a dramatic increase in access to, and 'online-ization' of, the social networking operations of this community – communications that previously took place via telephone calls, message services and mailed newsletters to post office boxes around the country. As a massive clearing house of information, these websites support the large-scale coordination of events, actions and spontaneous meetings. The website www.datastorm.com is just one example of a micro-community in which individual RVers are spatially located on a communal map and messaging board (Figs. 7 and 8). This level of instant connectivity at a distance has radically increased the social coherency of the community to the point that one may begin to understand it to be as socially dense as it is physically sparse. This is supported both by the staggering numbers of SFTRVers active in clubs online and the intensity of information traffic.

Plugging In: Lines/Nodes

If the first form of infrastructure supporting the SFTRVC is relatively non-physical, the second is of a more physical nature. It consists of two main elements: the road and highway system (constituting a system of lines or circuits); and parking/camping sites for vehicles (constituting a series of points or nodes). The RV vehicles themselves operate as mobile elements that flow within this physical network (Fig. 9).

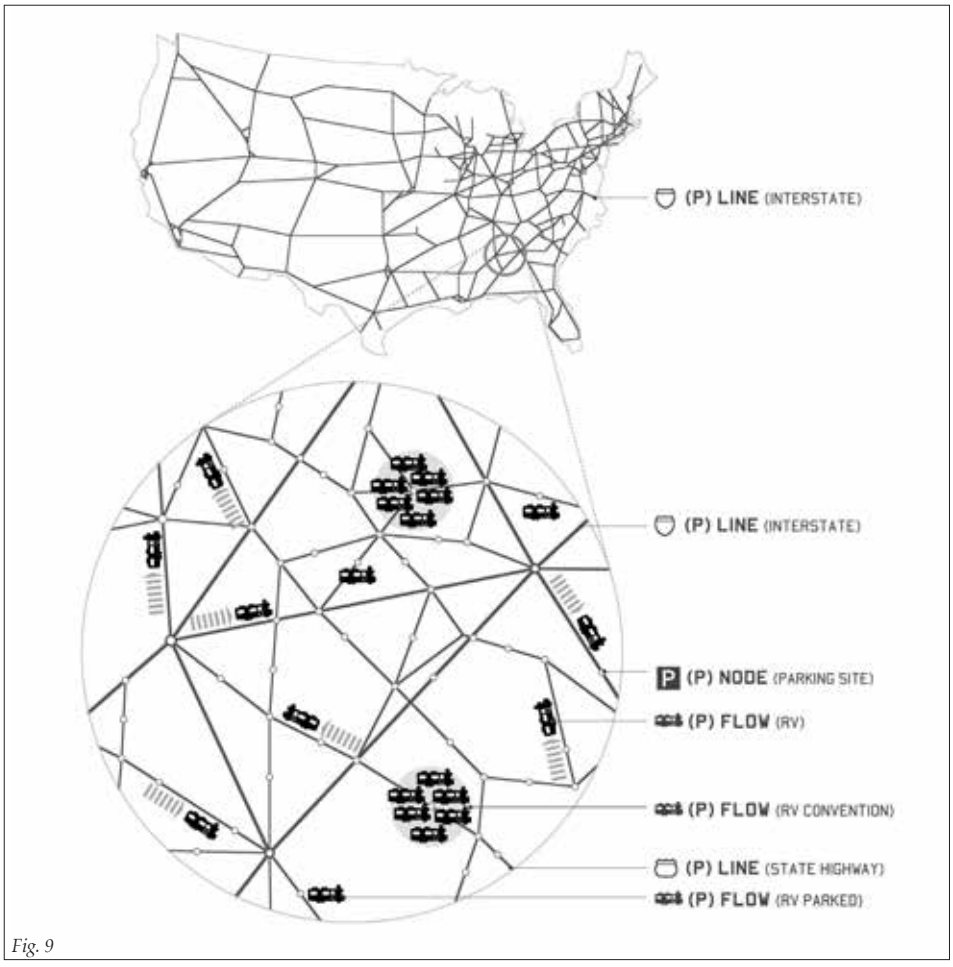


Fig. 9

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 6: RV website: the Escapees RV Club: forum directory. Source: escapees.com

Fig. 7: Automatic reported locations. Courtesy of Don Bradner.

Fig. 8: Close-up of automatic reported locations. Courtesy of Don Bradner.

Fig. 9: RV physical network. Source: Deane Simpson.

Fig. 10: Quartzsite, Arizona, 2008. Photograph by Deane Simpson.

Parking and camping sites function as a series of infrastructural nodes that may be classified as either formal or informal sites. Formal campsites include public RV parks, membership or co-op parks, and private parks, and typically offer what is referred to as a 'hook-up'. Hook-ups supply electricity and water and sometimes waste removal services – not available at informal sites – directly to the RV. Although RVs are somewhat limited in their 'off-roading' capacities – implying restrictions in freedom of movement – there are various non-paved off-road surfaces that are easily accessible. The most notable include the deserts of the south-west, where RVs are able to drive and park in almost any location.

Clustering: Instant Cities

Common informal sites include Long-term Visitor Areas (LTVA) administered by the US Department of the Interior. These sites are available to *boondockers* – or those who stay in areas where there are no power or water hook-ups and no charge for occupying the space. A high proportion of RVs are equipped to boondock. This requires self-contained water and waste disposal tanks and a 12-volt electrical system, which is normally powered by either solar panels or a generator. Some LTVAs also offer a centralized water supply and waste dumping facilities.

The points or nodes within the physical network vary greatly in size, from single RVs parking alone or in small groups on a remote site, to instant cities of RVers numbering in the hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. The most famous informal site is Quartzsite – a small Arizona desert town close to the Californian border. Its permanent population of 3,500 inhabitants expands exponentially in the winter months. While there are no official Quartzsite RV population figures,

Fig. 11

Fig. 11: Quartzsite, Arizona, 2008. Photographs by Deane Simpson.

estimates of the peak number in late January range from 300,000 to one million (Counts & Counts, 1996; Grant, 2003; Varnelis, 2007), defining an *instant city* of new third agers (Fig. 10). The movements of such large numbers are coordinated predominantly online through club websites. The Escapees club, for example, has several pages online dedicated to social events and activities, running three or more get-together locations in the Quartzsite area simultaneously. The majority of winter RVers at Quartsite boondock on LTVAs. They arrange themselves in various spatial formations ranging from individual detached stand-alone vehicles, to four vehicle 'courtyards', to linear bands and pinwheel corrals, constructing micro-communities or neighbourhoods of temporary association (Fig. 11). The instant city phenomenon takes place not only at Quartzsite. There are many other examples of large-scale club events also coordinated online, such as the Good Sam Club rallies ('Samborees'), sometimes attracting tens of thousands of RVers. Many 'clustering' actions are organized online in very short periods of time, such as the organizing of SFTRVers to distribute aid and offer building labour in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005.

'Clustering' is related both to the socio-cultural rituals of the SFTRVC and the technological support that allows for communication and coordinated movement. In effect, these instant cities, like Quartzsite, constitute a form of urbanity produced almost entirely from bottom-up forces without top-down planning, apart from basic planning of vital infrastructural services.

Squatting: Destination Boondocking

The points or nodes associated with the physical infrastructure exist not only in what are traditionally understood as 'non-urban' areas. In many cases, informal RV parking sites are embedded within the existing urban fabric, operating on an unwritten 'timeshare' basis. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as *destination boondocking*. According to one RVer, these sites include, "in the winter, hotel/motel parking lots. In the summer, school yards. Anywhere else that is quiet and that we won't be in anyone's way. Shopping centers, church parking lots (except on Saturday night)" (Counts & Counts, 1996: 173). The discount retailer Walmart has a well-known policy of allowing free overnight parking for RVs in most of its retail parking lots. This functions for mutual benefit: RVers have a free, relatively safe, accessible and reliable network of locations in which to stay overnight, with access to bathrooms and store supplies; and in return, Walmart maintains a large number of loyal customers who occupy parking lot space only during the over-

Fig. 12

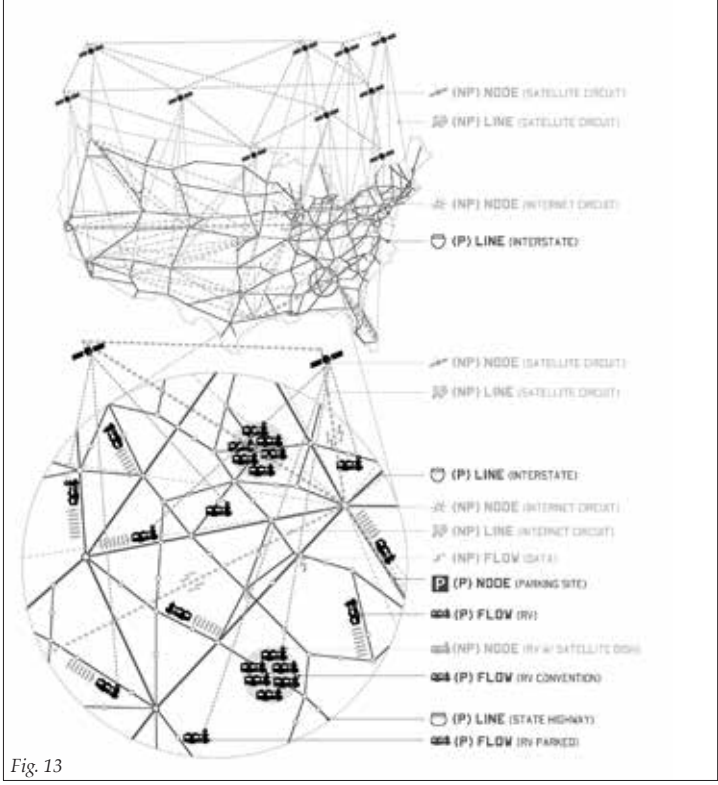


Fig. 13

Fig. 12: Destination boondocking, Walmart, Arizona. Photograph by Deane Simpson.

Fig. 13: RV physical and non-physical networks combined. Source: Deane Simpson.

night off-peak period (Fig. 12). Destination boondocking has become a widely accepted spatial practice, so widely practised that several guidebooks have been published listing locations and directions to every Walmart in the US, as well as supplementary titles that list the few Walmarts not allowing overnight parking (for example, Wiley & Wiley, 2006).

The Walmart case is interesting as an example of a large corporation willing to tolerate what would normally be understood as illegal squatting. The possibility for the transient RV occupation of existing urban environments is supported by the fact that these practices are relatively indistinguishable from regular parking, especially in the case of smaller RVs, making it difficult for law enforcement to control. Destination boondocking is the most obvious engagement on the part of SFTRVers in marginal behaviour typically associated with other forms of transient nomadic lifestyles. It is precisely these practices that skirt and challenge the logic of accepted spatial and legal behaviour of the striated sedentary environment. It would be possible to conceive of this practice, whether it takes place in a school parking lot or retailer parking lot, as an opportunistic occupation of urban space, producing an agile additional layer of urbanity infiltrating the existing sedentary fabric.

Infrastructuring: Nomadic Urbanism

In overlaying the two broad categories of infrastructure – the physical and the non-physical – the RV operates as both a node (in the non-physical case) and material flow (in the case of the physical infrastructure). This suggests a complex network of interconnected flowing nodes functioning in between the physical and non-physical realms (Fig. 13).

In *The Rise of the Network Society,* Manuel Castells theorizes a shift in the dominant mode of urbanism at the end of the twentieth century. Castells argues that the traditionally defined urbanism of the "space of places" (which we associate with the traditional sedentary city of identity, centrality and materiality), is increasingly subordinated by that which he refers to as the "space of flows", the space that "links up distant locales around shared functions and meanings on the basis of electronic circuits and fast transportation corridors, while isolating and subduing the logic of experience embodied in the space of places" (Castells, 2001:

171). The "space of flows", in other words, refers to an emerging spatial logic in which social interaction occurs in between others who are both absent and distant in time and space – a schema in which living, inhabitation and social connectivity transgress immediate physical distance.[8] In this context, the SFTRVC is emblematic of the space of flows – an arrangement in which houses themselves and their inhabitants are literally in a state of flow, along with the information flowing between them – producing an urbanity that is physically spread (to varying degrees), but densely connected socially. The nomadic community of the SFTRVC therefore deploys practices that are not anti-urban by definition, but produce an alternate form of decentralized urbanism – a socially coherent urban field. From Castell's point of view, density as an urban concept shifts from describing purely physical material conditions to include socio-informational ones. Additionally, the mobility and clustering of the SFTRVC suggests a shift in the understanding of urban density from something stable, toward something in a constant state of fluctuation and instability. Instead of generating urbanity from its most common component – sedentary buildings – this highly mobile, dispersed and connected field produces a *nomadic urbanism* of infrastructure.

8. Penelope Dean's paper on the Australian Royal Flying Doctor Service is a highly relevant case study precedent in dispersed urbanism (2000: 86-91). According to Dean, "Whilst it bears no historic reference to the evolution of the 'city' as we know it, it is an extreme example where minimum density is coupled with maximum social cohesion." If the Royal Flying Doctor Service functions as a fixed decentralized network, the RV community operates as a mobile distributed network.

It is useful to contextualize the contemporary spatial practices of the SFTRVC with other historical mobile practices. There are three examples that resonate: those of the early pioneers of the nineteenth-century American west; those attached to the suburban flight from urban America in the mid-twentieth century; and those proposed by the architectural avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly Archigram. All three examples may be linked together under the umbrella of urban decentralization, of which the so-called 'exurban' condition of the American edge city is the most documented contemporary form. According to Castells: "this spatial form is indeed very specific to the American experience. Because … it is embedded in a classic pattern of American history, always pushing for the endless search for a promised land in new settlement" (1996: 400).

Pioneering: From Westward to Interstitial Frontier

SFTRVers often frame their own actions as the "modern embodiment of the early pioneers" (Counts & Counts, 1996: 94). As well as a psychological state of freedom, adventure and independence, the 'pioneering spirit' also defines a social attitude with clear micro-scale spatial implications, most obvious in the circled and closed courtyard formations of RVs that echo the circled wagon corral originally intended to offer protection from external attackers. This has been adopted by RVers as a way of producing a central space for communal activities – activities that also echo the social activities of the pioneer period: the communal (pot-luck) dinner around the camp-fire, games and the sing-along (Fig. 14).

At the macro-scale, the SFTRVC reconfigures the westward expanding line of the frontier as an "interstitial frontier" (Counts & Counts, 1996: 111). Spatial expansionism for the SFTRVer is directed toward the production of a form of nomadic urbanity in areas where urbanity is not yet present (at least in conventional terms.) The practice of destination boondocking extends this frontier beyond one based upon a finding or filling of gaps where 'the city' has not yet manifested itself, to include the extension of frontiers of transient occupation within the already existing 'city'. While the former opens up questions concerning the sustainability of such practices, the latter is particularly interesting in the way it contests the legal and social frontiers of urban space.

Fig. 14

Fig. 14: RV camp-fire. Photograph by Deane Simpson.

9. The argument for suburbia's failure to address the needs and desires of the new third age is most clearly stated in Del Webb's Sun City film, *The Beginning*, from the mid-1960s.

Escaping: The Second Wave

The decentralized practices of the SFTRVC also have a particular resonance with the spatial practices of mid-twentieth-century urban 'flight'. If this first wave of flight, from the urban centre to the suburban edge, was driven by fear of urban crime, falling property values and public school integration as well as government and military policy, then the SFTRVC may be interpreted as a second wave of flight, from the suburban and exurban edge, to 'anywhere' and 'everywhere', one carried out by the same cohort that took part in the first wave. In light of the conventional three-part RV maxim – 'freedom, independence and adventure' – it would be possible to speculate that the second wave is at the same time driven by a fear of confinement, dependence and boredom in the suburban periphery. Based on the "endless search for the promised-land in new settlements", Castells comments that this also means that "each wave of social and physical escapism (for example, the abandonment of inner cities, leaving the lower social classes and ethnic minorities trapped in ruins) deepened the crisis of American cities" (1996: 400). The abandonment of the suburbs by retirees may be interpreted in its most negative light as another form of self-interested escapism from territory – designed predominantly for the young nuclear family – that neither delivered the lifestyle promised, nor structured a lifestyle suitable for an increasingly aged population.[9]

Imagining: Technological Arcadia

The strongest historical resonance to the SFTRVC is located in the projected spatial visions of members of the 1960s and 1970s architectural avant-garde such as Superstudio and Archigram. Archigram in particular – through projects such

as *Instant City, Walking City*, *Living Pod* and *Freetime Node* – engaged in themes of nomadism, networks, mobility and transience; they focused on the exploitation of technology to further personal choice and freedom. This approach – characterized most distinctly in their declared moratorium on building – challenged (to paraphrase Archigram) an architectural establishment distracted in the tenets of permanence and good-taste. The suspension of 'building' in Archigram's work was not meant to signal the end of urbanism, but the emergence of a new form of urbanism based upon an (increasingly invisible) infrastructure. For this new urbanity to emerge, wrote Archigram's David Green:

> … we will have to wait until the steel and concrete mausoleums of our cities, villages and towns etc., decay and the suburbs bloom and flourish. They in turn will die and the world will perhaps again be a garden. And that perhaps is the dream, and we should all be busy persuading not to build but to prepare for the invisible networks in the air. (Green, 1969: 297)

This particular urban vision – described by commentators as techno-primitivism, high-tech ruralism or techno-pastoralism – is centred on a return to nature through technology; escaping the constraints and the monotony of the city through 'urbanism'.

In the 1969 project, "Instant City: Children's Primer", Green described a scenario for a dispersed city of nomadic inhabitants living in trailers. He referred to trailer nomads as "node-owners" plugged into camouflaged "logplugs" and "rokplugs" in the wilderness. Logplugs, for example, would offer vital services such as water and power, and importantly what was referred to as the "international information hookup" – an Archigram-ism for the yet-to-be-invented internet: "Plugs will increase the service to these [instant and remote] communities…. The whole of London or New York will be available in the world's leafy hollows, deserts and flowered meadows" (Green, 1969: 297). Imagined is a utopia formed from the collision of the most urban and the most anti-urban of conditions, in which the most 'ideal' aspects of the urban realm would be brought to the 'natural' environment. With this in mind, *Instant City* may be considered as a premonition of the contemporary SFTRVC, an urban vision realized by the same generational cohort, 30 to 40 years later, as retirees.

Evolving

In this context, it is necessary not to underestimate how radical the realization of this set of practices on such a large scale is. The SFTRVC represents a social movement operating as a distributed city – roughly equivalent in inhabitants to the City of Chicago, the third largest city in the US – produced without planning or buildings (in the conventional sense of these terms). By virtue of having been realized, these experiments produce an urbanism that exceeds the somewhat uncomplicated imaging of Archigram's technologized arcadia, with its romantic vision of technology and nature as a means of transcending the limitations of the city. Grown from a particular set of socio-demographic, technological and cultural conditions, this form of spatial organization clearly problematizes the conventionally aligned series of relations between sedentary and nomadic, urban and rural, dense and sparse, town and country, home and away, and culture and nature. The short-circuiting of these constructs, with the support of infrastructural networks, offers potential (both positive and negative) for recon-

figuring approaches to defining contemporary urbanity: in discarding conventional notions of 'home', for example, alternative practices of 'homemaking' are developing; in being forced to give up regular consumptive practices, new ones are evolving; and in abandoning traditional forms of sedentary civic engagement, other modes of civic action are emerging.

References

Barfield, T. (1993). *The Nomadic Alternative*. Upper Saddle River (NJ): Prentice Hall.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.

Blaikie, A. (1999). *Ageing and Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carmichael, M. (1991). *Nomads*. London: Collins & Brown.

Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society*. London: Blackwell.

Castells, M. (2001). Informationalism and the Network Society. In H. Pekka (Ed.), *The Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of the Information Age* (pp. 155-78). New York: Random House.

Cresswell, T. (1997). Imagining the Nomad: Mobility and the Postmodern Primitive. In G. Benko and U. Strohmayar (Eds.), *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity* (pp. 360-379). Oxford: Blackwell.

Counts, D. A., & Counts, D. R. (1996). *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America*. Peterborough (Ontario): Broadview Press.

Dean, P. (2000). Outback Metropolis – Time Sharing Urbanism. *Architecture Australia*, (January-February), 86-91.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1986). *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Minneapolis: Semiotext(e) University of Minnesota Press.

Grant, R. (2003). *Ghost Riders: Travels with American Nomads*. London: Little, Brown.

Green, D. (1969). Children's Primer. In D. Lachmayer, P. Shoenig & D. Crompton (Eds.), *A Guide to Archigram 1961-1974* (p. 297). London: Academy Editions.

Huber, A., & O'Reilly, K. (2004). The Construction of Heimat under Conditions of Individualized Modernity: Swiss and British Elderly Migrants in Spain. *Ageing and Society*, (24), 327-51.

Jabbur, J. S. (1995). *The Bedouins and the Desert*. Albany (NY): State University of New York Press.

Khaldun, I. (1967 [1377]). *The Muqaddimah*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press.

Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) (2006). *What is a Recreational Vehicle*. Retrieved 12 October, 2005, http://www.rvia.org/Content/NavigationMenu/RVFactsNews/RVTypesPrices/default.htm

Varnelis, K. (2007). Swarm Intelligence: Quartzsite Arizona. In R. Sumrell & K. Varnelis, *Blue Monday: Stories of Absurd Realities and Natural Philosophies* (pp. 144-170). Barcelona: Actar.

White, R. (2000). *Home on the Road*. Washington (DC): Smithsonian.

Wiley, B. & Wiley, J. (2006). *The Walmart Locator* (6th ed.). Bend (Oregon): Wiley Products.

So High You Can't Get Over It:
Neo-classicism, Modernism and Colonial Practice in the Forming of a Twentieth-century Architectural Landmark

Michael Findlay

Amyas Connell (1901-80) was a New Zealand-born architect and a leading figure in British modernism. His first commission, High and Over (1929-31), for the archaeologist and classical scholar Bernard Ashmole, is among the earliest modernist houses built in England and one of the few buildings by a New Zealand architect that commands a significant place in international architectural history. This paper examines High and Over from a New Zealand perspective. Connell's critical profile has been partially shaped by the soubriquet 'Wild Colonial Boys', used to frame the work of Connell and others by the English architectural historian Dennis Sharp. Such an interpretation overlooks the depth of Connell's experience prior to High and Over and arguably overplays his anti-theoretical and outsider status.

This paper explores the design sources for High and Over. It was an unusual fusion of classical geometry, Beaux-Arts planning, Corbusian aesthetic, and Parisian décor and landscape. Connell's interest in the villas of Hadrianic Rome was evident in High and Over's centralized plan, which reveals a regard for classical geometry that transcends the usual explanations for such practices in the Beaux-Arts teaching systems adopted in British architectural education. This rich combination of elements has polarized opinion on its merits as a piece of modernist architecture. The High and Over project also included a number of related structures set in a landscape plan not usually included in analysis. The landscape plan is considered here, with reference to French modernist garden design of the 1920s, including the designs of the Armenian architect Gabriel Guévrékian at the Paris Exposition and the Villa Noailles at Hyères (1927).

High and Over occupies a place where the traditions of classicism and the emergent features of modernism intersect. Connell may have produced a distinctively British form of classical modernism, but it is also an artefact of New Zealand origin, with its roots in rural Taranaki.

***

Amyas Douglas Connell (Fig. 1) was born in the Taranaki dairy town of Eltham in 1901, where his father was a professional photographer and landscape artist. Amyas also wanted to be an artist but was unsure of his future direction, and after his final year at school, laboured on a dairy factory construction site over

Fig. 1: Amyas Connell and sister Beatrix, 1926. Eltham Historical Society.

the summer of 1918 (J. Connell, 1985). The site is unknown but Taranaki was in the midst of a construction boom led by Eltham architects J. W. Rough and J. Duffill, who designed over 100 dairy buildings in this region alone (Bartle, 2006). Many of these were built in steel reinforced concrete. Pease's Building in Bridge Street, Eltham (1910), was designed with a fully suspended concrete floor; and the slightly later Wilkinson's Building (1913) was a row of five two-storey shops with a total frontage of 41 metres, using monolithic construction with beams cast into the floor slabs (South Taranaki District Council, 2000). This ferro-cement building with its classical façade incorporated the two main threads of Connell's early practical experience in New Zealand: advanced construction and neo-classical formality. His brother Jock recalled that this first job ended following a disagreement with the foreman over the correct way to lay foundations, but the experience focused Amyas' interest in architecture. In 1919, he travelled to Wellington to be articled to the firm of Young & Fearn, where he was offered a four-year term and a relatively generous salary of £2.3.4 per month, rising to £5.8.4 at the fourth year (Item 54, 1916-40: 8). It was common for articled pupils to receive no payment at all under these arrangements and Connell's remuneration suggests that Stanley Fearn expected to get good work from him.

British-born Fearn was the first recipient of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) Gold Medal in 1927, awarded for the William Booth Memorial Training College in Wellington, a project actually completed in 1913 (Walker, 2005: 30). Connell received an up-to-date training with the firm and at night classes organized by the Wellington Branch of the NZIA. This atelier training followed the model established by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the university-based schools of architecture. Connell's first-year course of study included the history of architecture, practical mathematics, structural mathematics, building construction, freehand drawing and an oral examination. Solutions to design and construction problems were also submitted in the form of a 'testimony of study' (Item 57, 1916-40: 65). Connell won a competition organized by the Wellington Branch of the NZIA for a war memorial in 1921 (NZIA Wellington Branch, 1921: 12-13), followed by a third place in an NZIA-sponsored national competition behind F. Gordon Wilson (1900-59), the future Government Architect (Notes, 1922: 75). Fearn was a strong advocate of young architects travelling abroad, and advised the students of the atelier to, "Let it be the aim and object of everyone to eventually get to the Beaux Arts, Paris, even if only for six months, for that is the fountain head of the world where architectural knowledge is concerned" (Untitled, 1921: 86). Fearn was acknowledging that the atelier method of training had its limitations and that talented students would benefit from exposure to British architectural teaching. The outward flow of New Zealand architects to Britain was increased after the First World War when places in the schools of architecture were offered to demobilized ex-servicemen and an expatriate colonial presence began to form in London and Liverpool.

Connell met his future professional partner Basil Robert Ward (1902-76) through the Wellington Architectural Students Association. With Fearn's encouragement, both decided to seek further opportunities in London and it added to their myth in later years that they worked their passage as coal trimmers on the *SS Karamea*. Connell rented a room at Clements Inn Passage in central London and worked for Arts and Crafts architects William and Edward Hunt (News and Topics, 1926: 872). Although money was tight, Connell and Ward visited the 1925 L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, where they

viewed Le Corbusier's Pavillion de l'Esprit Nouveau. In his recollections from the 1960s, Ward was dismissive of the Exposition apart from Le Corbusier's contribution. This is a retrospective view from his position as theorist and historian of the practice, expressed at a time when Art Deco was still regarded as an inferior manifestation of modernism (Ward, 1967: 74). There was much at the exposition to excite young colonial architects. Amongst the most talked about sights was a cubist garden, Le Jardin d'eau et de luminiére, by the Armenian architect Gabriel Guévrékian (Imbert, 1993). This densely organized triangular garden used a revolving faceted glass sphere, tiered triangular concrete pools, horizontal water jets, coloured electric lights and the optical vibration of complementary colour planes to explore notions of space and time. As with other French modernist garden designs, this was nothing to do with horticulture or the picturesque. It was an 'instant garden', constructed from metal, glass and hard-edged concrete. Avant-garde French garden design had a close relationship to the contemporary visual and plastic arts. Exhibited elsewhere were Parisian architect Rob Mallet-Stevens' sculptures that resembled Cubist trees made from slabs of concrete.

Connell and Ward chose to study at the Architectural Atelier associated with the Bartlett School of University College, London. The Atelier has been described as an add-on to the Bartlett, surviving from the aspirations of Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942) to apply the architectural teaching systems of the French École des Beaux-Arts to British architectural education (Campbell, 1989: 133). Blomfield has often been simplistically characterized as a bombastic reactionary. While adamantly opposed to modernism, he was also an admirer of progressive French architecture and its teaching methods and used his influence to reform British architectural education along those lines. Studying at the Atelier did not require formal enrolment or lead to any qualifications, but it was considered a useful place to network and establish connections as well as for preparing the large and complex drawings required for competitions. The Atelier was led by French-born and Beaux-Arts trained Hector Othon Corfiato, whom both Connell and Ward regarded highly (Ward, 1967: 78). Corfiato built relatively little in his lifetime but his teaching was influential over the generation of students that came together at the Bartlett. Corfiato was cosmopolitan in outlook and ensured that the focus was on France and Northern Europe as opposed to the concentration on American models at the competing Liverpool School of Architecture under C. H. Reilly. Connell's New Zealand experience seems to have measured up well against his British contemporaries, as it became his intention during 1925 to compete for the prestigious Rome Scholarship in Architecture (Ward, 1967: 78).

Connell was informed that he had been awarded the Rome scholarship in June 1926 (Shaw, 1926). Ward had also entered the competition and gained second place but had neglected to join the RIBA and was therefore ineligible for the Henry Jarvis Travelling Studentship. He was awarded a special studentship from the Jarvis Fund instead (Personal, 1926: 10). The Rome scholarship provided an annual stipend, board and lodging – financial support that was crucial to Connell's extended stay in Europe as he had no private means. Connell and Ward celebrated by taking three months leave of absence and returning to New Zealand where civic receptions were held to mark their wins (Shaw, 1927). They arrived back in London for Christmas 1926, working their passage once again, this time on the *SS Ruapehu* (Connell, 1926). Despite being "the highest tree in the orchard", personal rifts in its management and declining standards in its teaching programmes had shaken the status of the British School at Rome. As Louise

Campbell has noted: "Within a decade of its creation (in 1912), the faculty began to use the Rome scholarship not simply to encourage systematic working methods, clarity of planning and good draughtsmanship but actually to discourage what it termed 'modern tendencies'" (1989: 131). As well as being chronically underfunded, there was no consistent educational policy and the instruction tended to reinforce the divide between architecture as a profession and an academic discipline. The course was criticized for its lack of relevance to practice and a large number of Rome and Jarvis prize-winners went back to teach at schools of architecture. In 1924, the term of the scholarship was shortened to two years, with a third year available on application, in an effort to meet the requirements of students keen to enter practice.

Despite its flaws, the Rome prize seemed to be created for individuals like Connell and Ward. The scheme was established to foster talent in young architects who found it difficult to pay their way through articled training and university-based education, and was open to any British subject under the age of 30. Connell and Ward were not the first New Zealanders to achieve success in this field. Edward Armstrong (1896-1992) was awarded the Jarvis Scholarship in 1921 but resigned in five months and returned to New Zealand for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery commission (Campbell, 1989: 151). The same honour went the following year to Akaroa-born George Checkley (1893-1960) who, like Armstrong, entered the Liverpool School of Architecture on an armed forces serviceman's grant (Sharples et al, 1996: 168). Both Armstrong and Checkley went on to contribute to the British modern movement, Checkley through a pair of early houses at Cambridge and Armstrong as the designer of sensitively detailed blocks of working-class flats in and around London. Checkley, although a retiring individual, was an important link for the colonials of the late 1920s. He was part of the influential architectural set at Cambridge that included the Australian Raymond McGrath (1903-77) and his client Mansfield Forbes, whose remodelled Georgian house Finella (1929) was an early rallying point for British modernists.

The main focus for architecture students at the British School at Rome was the restoration through drawings of ruined ancient sites. This was carried out in an interdisciplinary manner alongside students from art and archaeology departments. In his first year, Connell completed drawings of the Campodoglio including its Roman remnants, and researched the archaeological bibliography of Capri in preparation for his restoration of the Villa of Tiberius (Fig. 2). Summarizing his year's work, Connell wrote of his admiration for "the great villas of Imperial Rome", due to their interesting layouts and "purity of style" (Connell, 1927). The Rome scholarship included funding for travel and Connell reported visiting Naples, Salerno, Amalfi, Ravello, Genoa, Florence, Lucia, Pisa, Siena, Venice, Ravenna, Bologna, Padua, Turin and Milan. Additionally he spent ten days in Paris at the École des Beaux-Arts studying drawings, and managed to visit Dijon, Lyons, Marseilles and the Riviera (Connell, 1928). Under the terms of the Rome prize, Connell was obliged to apply for a renewal of his scholarship for a third year. London-based secretary of the school, Evelyn Shaw (1882-1974), wrote that, "Connell's case appears to be so strong that I am quite prepared to do my best to get it through even if it is necessary to ask Sassoon or someone else for the money" (Shaw, 1928). Shaw was referring to a private donor of the school, Sir Philip Sassoon (1888-1939), an MP and cousin of the poet Seigfried Sassoon. Connell worked on his major reconstruction during 1928, with particular

Fig. 2

Fig. 2: Connell's drawing of the Villa of Tiberius, Capri, prepared as part of his final year of study at the Rome School, 1928. British School at Rome Archive.

attention to the Villa's complex hilltop setting. The largest of Tiberius' numerous structures on the island, the Villa originally stood five levels high and was a demanding structure to represent. Even at 1/16":1'0" scale, the plan sheet measured 7 x 6 feet, and was accompanied by elevations and sections almost as large. These drawings were left incomplete when Connell resigned his scholarship in January 1929 to return to London and commence his first architectural commission.

Connell's first client was the retiring director of the British School at Rome, the classical scholar Bernard Ashmole (1894-1988). Ashmole was young, energetic and liberal – an unusual combination of attributes in a director of the Rome school – but he had been appointed in 1925 in order to rescue the school's failing reputation. He regarded Connell as the star of the Rome school and later wrote that Connell's study of the Capitol in Rome revealed "their subtleties perhaps more thoroughly than anyone before, except perhaps their creator" (Ashmole, 1994: 51). Connell returned to London and re-established contact with a fellow colonial student from the Atelier, Stewart Lloyd Thomson (1902-90). Connell and Thomson set up at 11 Mecklenburg Place in the heart of Bloomsbury, conveniently close to University College and Ashmole's office as the newly appointed Yates Professor of Archaeology. While the first existing drawings for High and Over, dated June 1929, are signed Connell & Thomson (Connell & Thomson, 1929),[1] neither mentions the other in any known source and their working relationship is therefore conjectural. Apart from High and Over, the outlook was bleak. Jock Connell recalled that his brother had failed to hold on to a major potential client in Philip Sassoon, who had commissioned him to design a garden at his restored mansion house, Trent Park (Sharp, 1994: 62). Thomson only records on his ARIBA candidate's statement that he began professional practice in 1929 and made no claims for collaboration on High and Over (Thomson, 1939). His first British commission, the house St Raphael in Hornchurch, London, did not eventuate until 1932, by which time Connell had moved on, rejoined by Basil Ward. Even so, Thomson can be counted as another significant colonial practitioner of the flat-roofed, thin-walled, reinforced concrete modern house in Britain. Thomson has disappeared from the published account of Connell's early career, but their brief association is further evidence of the colonial nexus that formed at the British schools of architecture after the First World War and had such great influence over the shape of British modernism. Aside from Thomson and Ward, Connell's milieu formed around a network of mainly colonial and foreign modernist architects. He was a friend of the Australian Raymond McGrath and

1. See also a perspective drawing in Sharp (1994: 26).

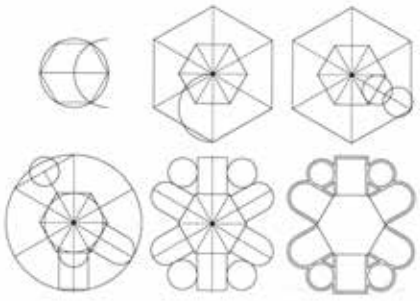


Fig. 3

Fig. 3: The geometry of Roman villas was a major influence on Connell's radial plan for High and Over. The Sala Trilobata adjacent to the Baths of Trajan (AD 109) is an example of Roman planning based on the hexagon (Jones, 2000: 92).

the urbane Russian Serge Chermaeff (1900-96), whose romantic design tendencies mostly placed them outside the emergent branch of heavily theorized modernism. Architect and industrial designer Christian Barman (1898-1980) was also among Connell's circle.

The site chosen by the Ashmoles was part of the Shardeloes Estate in Amersham, a Buckinghamshire town at the northern end of London's Metropolitan Line. The 12-acre site was elevated but bare of trees or other significant features apart from a hollow marking the position of a disused chalk pit. The decision was made to build on the level area above the pit and Connell began work late in 1928. The initial design for High and Over was later described by Ashmole as "an Elizabethan plan, E-shaped, the two projecting wings forming a courtyard which would be open to the south" (Ashmole, 1994: 51). This first proposal was turned down as it did not make effective use of the terrain and exposure to sun. No drawings survive of this scheme, but it would seem that the basic elements were in place. The combination of hovering roof canopies, punched out slot windows and plain white walls epitomized the new architecture of the 1920s and it seems probable that these formal elements would have been present in the discarded first proposal. Ashmole's account of the planning process has the Y-plan as his suggestion, taken up by Connell who understood the potential of the 120-degree arrangement of the main parts of the building around a centralized hexagonal hub (Ashmole, 1994: 52). Reference has been made to the Edwardian free plan and British houses built with modified Y-plans (Thistlewood & Heeley, 1997: 86). It is likely that Connell was aware of these but he was more inclined to draw directly from classical Roman sources, particularly the novel geometries of the Hadrianic period, a subject that he had mastered while in Rome.

An appealing notion to the modernist planner in Connell was that Roman geometry was used when it brought tangible practical advantages. A hexagon has the useful feature of containing the greatest area within the shortest perimeter. It may also be multiplied and composed into a regular pattern or subdivided into equilateral triangles. Hexagonal room shapes were incorporated into Roman baths and one particular example of hexagonal planning, the Sala Trilobata, adjacent to the Baths of Trajan (Fig. 3), might be considered as a model for the planning of High and Over (Jones, 2000: 92). In this instance, rooms coming off the central space were constrained in size by the length of the straight-line segment forming the perimeter of the hexagon. This set of proportions would not be effective for a plan that demanded an appropriate scale relationship between the entrance hall of a modern house and its major rooms. Connell instead expanded the hexagon to define the outer walls and drew a double square starting from the future fountain spigot, so that the spaces leading off were proportioned according to their function. The fountain has posed a critical dilemma for those striving to fit High and Over into the conventional narrative of modernism. Robert Esau surmises it "may be a deliberate evocation of some Roman or Italian prototype known only to Ashmole and Connell" (Esau, 1994: 61) and it is clear that water plays a particular role in the planning of the house and the garden.

The hall floor was laid with black marble cut into triangles, and an illuminated circular glass fountain was set in the centre of a six-armed star. The larger hexagon was extended into an equilateral triangle that delineated the canopy over the front entrance and the shape of the stair tower. A circle exactly half the width of the hall was cut from the ceiling and allowed light from the stair tower to flood

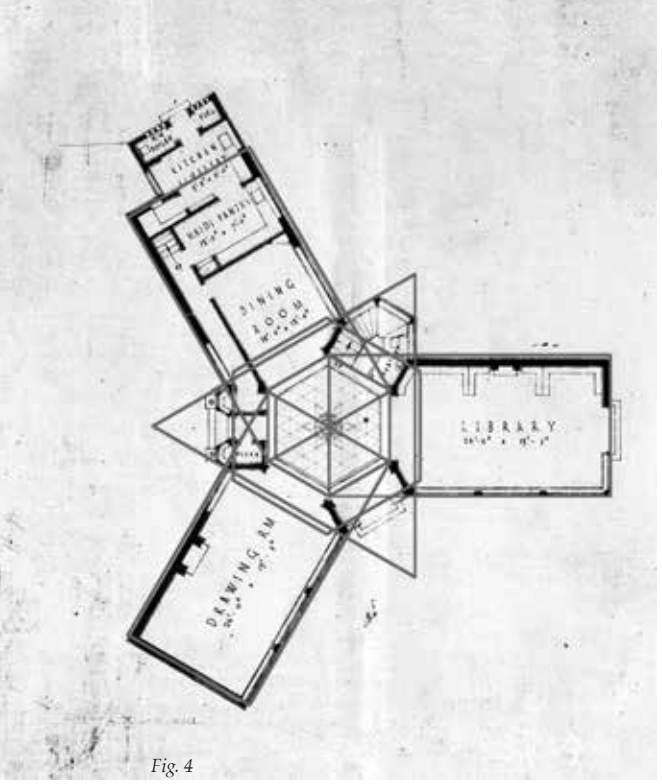


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

the internal space. Each wing housed a separate function, and circulation for the Ashmole family was via the direct route of the central hall and stair while servants were obliged to take the long way around through a complex arrangement of corridors and secondary stairs. Despite the understandable temptation to make the three-winged arrangement completely symmetrical, Connell could not contain the kitchen in the same wing as the dining room and this was pushed out into a single-storey projection that adds an interesting imbalance to the plan. Connell's manipulation of the hexagon into a plan answering the Ashmoles' functional needs was both sophisticated and true to pragmatic Roman practice (Fig. 4).

While Connell's post-Rome school landscape commission for Sir Philip Sassoon was constrained to formal English design tendencies by the client's desire to remodel his house, Trent Park, in neo-Georgian style, Connell was highly conscious of the natural landscape setting for High and Over and how features that related to the hexagonal geometry of the house might be added to it. Terraces were planned on two levels to manage the slope, lending a second level of geometric complexity to both house and garden. The terraces were to be linked to a pair of triangular flowerbeds and to other garden structures including pools and a pergola (Fig. 5). In this solid rooting of the house to the site and the elaboration of garden structures, Connell's work differs markedly from that of Le Corbusier, who was more concerned with the standardization of his houses so that they could rest on piloti, with minimal contact with the ground and on any type of site. Connell was more focused on Mediterranean villas on their stony hillsides, where walled and terraced gardens extend architectural space into the environment.

Connell's interest in French modernist garden design is reflected in a 1934 drawing that presented a complete garden plan for the extensive grounds (Connell & Ward, 1934). This extends an earlier plan prepared with the design of the house and which was well under way by the time High and Over was publicized in 1931. The garden close to the house was based on two equilateral triangles divided into terraced beds, one on the gentle slope rising to the left of the entrance and the other filling the steeper grade down to the base of the chalk pit. These structures strongly recalled Guévrékian's garden at the Paris Exposition as well as his better known courtyard at the Villa Noailles at Hyères (1927), one of the few surviving modernist gardens and thus well recognized today (Brown,

Fig. 4: The geometry of High and Over is based on a double-square rectangle rotated 120-degrees from the plan centre. Connell & Thompson (1929); regulating lines added by Michael Findlay.

Fig. 5: Connell's design for High and Over included a complex garden plan which was largely carried out by client Ashmole and garderner Marlow. The terraced rose garden was to be matched with another descending into the chalk pit but was left uncompleted. Architect and Building News, *p. 431.*

Fig. 6

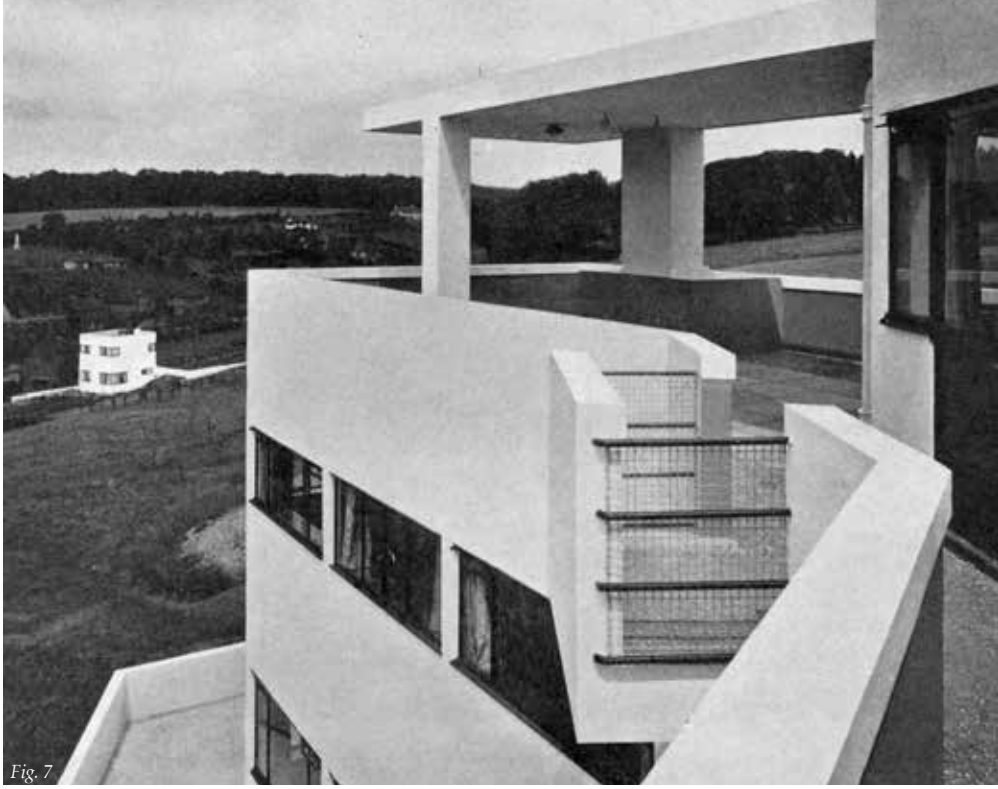


Fig. 7

Fig. 6: Connell's landscape plan for High and Over was developed in 1929. This plan from 1934 shows the intended landscape elements with four speculative houses on the High and Over Estate. RIBA Library.

Fig. 7: The view from the High and Over roof terrace, including the Lodge, 1931. Architect and Building News, *p. 429.*

2000: 38). Connell was on the Riviera in 1928 when the house, designed by Rob Mallet-Stevens (1886-1945), was newly completed. The similar hilltop position and framing of the garden from the roof terrace make comparison between the two projects highly tempting. Both gardens are heavily delineated, using white concrete walls and borders to create strong contrasts between ground and beds. The original plantings at Hyères were similar to Connell's plan for High and Over and used groupings of specimen plants rather than the pebbles that dominate the restored garden today. Connell's perspective drawing shows clipped shrubs adding a regular spherical feature that punctuates the descent, a device also used by Guévrékian. Three flights of steps were to lead down to a small circular pool sheltered by a stand of trees. A long pergola extended the axis of the library wing while a maze filled in another triangular space above the rose garden. These features were linked to a rectangular lawn that ran on a shallow 15-degree angle off the main axis towards the water tower at the top of the site, where a large rectangular pool was constructed. Between the lawn and the pergola was an extensive vegetable garden divided into rectangular beds. An arrow-shaped lawn intersected the main drive to the house where a fruit orchard dropped steeply into the chalk pit and was in turn bisected by a path laid out with rectangular sections of box hedge. Plants were chosen for both their practical and architectural form and the fruit trees and juvenile Irish yews planted by Ashmole are visible in photographs taken of the site in 1931. These elements were connected by a serpentine path that wound through the site and finished at the far end of the broad walk that was protected by a hedge. Connell placed these features sparingly on the large site and they were separated by large areas of roughly mown grass. Much of this ambitious scheme was achieved. A fascinating aerial photograph taken in the mid-1930s shows Ashmole and the indefatigable gardener George Marlow removing rocks and developing Connell's ambitious landscape plan (Sharp, 1994: 26). In the end, Ashmole changed the position of the swimming pool to the foot of the stairs descending the chalk pit and did not proceed with the main terraced garden or the maze (Fig. 6).

Connell's use of roof terraces, classical vistas from the three-storey house itself and retaining walls to create exterior promenades is related to the landscape theory of French modernist Andre Lurçat (1894-1970), whose Maison Guggenbuhl at 14 rue Nansouty, Paris (1927), had influenced other details at High and Over, including the roof canopies and bay window. Lurçat is now regarded as a

minor figure in French modernism but his design philosophies on architecture and gardens were carefully studied in Britain during the late 1930s (Imbert, 1993: 185). In his 1929 publication *Terrasses et Jardins*, he argued against living on the damp and unhealthy earth and, instead, building towards the sky where the benefits of light and sun could be enjoyed from the roof terrace (Imbert, 1993: 188). The strongly socialist Lurçat believed that even the most modest house was incomplete without a garden and the landscape design of High and Over can be seen as Connell's rejection of Corbusier's tabula rasa. The height that is such a striking feature of High and Over accentuated the impression that the garden was essentially composed to be seen from above, from the top of the water tower or with the roof terrace of the main house as a horizontal façade, rid of the clutter of complex roof lines, chimneys and the other accoutrements of the country house (Fig. 7).

Also constructed by 1931 were the lodge (lived in by George and May Marlow; Fig. 8), the water tower (Fig. 9) and a generator house. The lodge, unpublished as a plan but photographed for an extensive article in the *Architect and Building News* in 1931 (Robertson, 1931: 435), was a two-storey cubic design with corner slot windows and a striking angled wall that sheltered a private courtyard from the roadway. The generator house continued the theme with an engaged wall projecting towards the front of the site. This small cubic form was cut through with ventilation slots, and its abstract geometry effectively introduced the unfolding drama of the main structures, made more striking by the bareness of the hill on which they stood. High above the road stood an astounding object which resolved into a cylindrical water tank on a slender concrete pole combined with a pump house and racquet court. This highly irregular structure caused the local authorities to baulk but was forced on Ashmole due to the failure of the council to supply a water pipe sufficient to service the swimming pool (Ashmole, 1994: 55). Water emerges as crucial element in Connell's planning for High and Over, with many parts of the complex scheme being able to be read against Guévrékian's garden.

Connell's landscape plan for High and Over also reveals his interest in the disciplined but modern designs of Paul Vera (1888-1971), who was concerned to bridge the gap between the modern world and the classical French *paysager*, with its geometrical beds and shaped plantings. According to Dorothée Imbert, Vera prescribed a "'vernacular modernism' that praised labour" (1993: 73), a proposition that certainly describes Connell's plan and Ashmole's physical efforts alongside George Marlow to reshape the surroundings of High and Over. Vera's new formulation of the *jardin régulier* acknowledged labour, reflected in Connell's raising of the water tower to its prominence in the landscape plan and the positioning of the vegetable garden between the formal axes of the pergola and the broad walk. Tradition was not abandoned. These various garden rooms were served by the pergola and lawns edged by low hedges of box, controlled shrubs and tall clipped green walls, as were the neo-classical gardens of the past. Concrete was used as a modern substitute for stone masonry, and Ashmole recounted that, "He [Marlow] and I together cast several thousand square feet of deep concrete edges for the beds, and several thousand square feet of cement paving for the paths" (Ashmole, 1994: 59). The extension of the interior plan of High and Over into this heavily constructed synthetic environment, occurring at various levels of abstraction, was intensely architectural in terms of space-time. Movement and physical activity of all types were celebrated. The fives court at

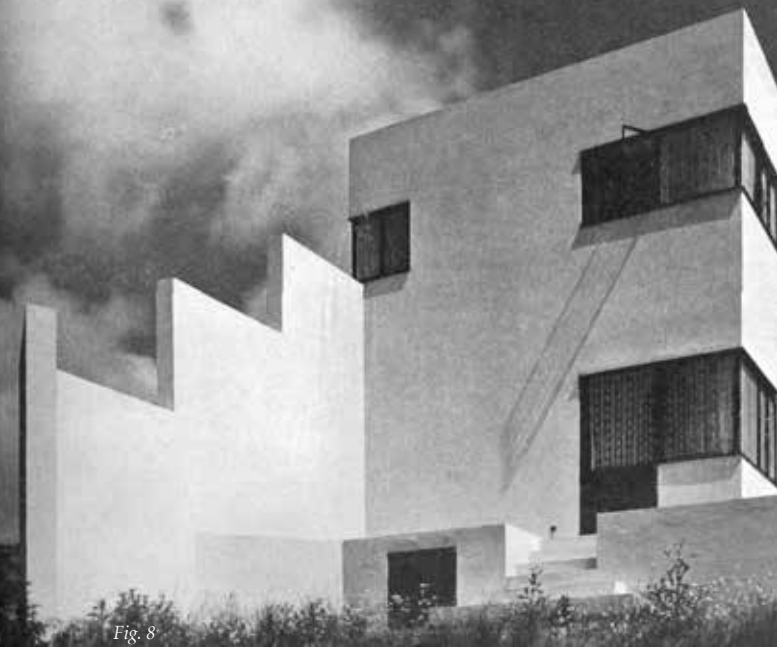


Fig. 8: The Lodge, built for George and May Marlow, 1931. Architect and Building News, *p. 435.*

Fig. 9: The water tower stood above the main house at the top of the rise. It housed a squash court and an elevated platform from where the garden was viewed. Architect and Building News, *p. 435.*

the base of the water tower, regarded by some as a bizarre novelty, makes perfect sense in this context. The climb to the brow of the hill 40 metres above the road was rewarded by the sight of the field, called the 'velvet lawn', across the Misbourne valley (Ashmole, 1994: 59). The most exciting vista was that from the top of the water tower, accessible by an internal ladder. This sight line took in the large circular pool that Ashmole and Marlow excavated at the foot of the garden steps where the family swam and exercised. This vantage point also reinforced the two-dimensional nature of the modern garden, designed to be appreciated from the roof terrace as a geometrical pattern on the land. The plan reveals both Connell's observance of French trends in modernist garden design, the Beaux-Arts tradition of geometric planning and enfilade, and the English landscape tradition within the fragmented gestalt of early modernism, where foreign and nationalistic influences were deployed together in the rush to experiment with the new architecture.

In an effort to recoup some of the considerable expense of developing the estate, Ashmole approached Connell to develop a planned subdivision on the lower part of the site. This was a risky venture as the worst effects of the great depression were only just beginning to lift and the British house-buying public was sceptical about the new architecture. With Ashmole's brother-in-law Charles de Peyer investing in the project, four houses were built on the slope leading up to the lodge (Connell & Ward, 1934). With the Sun houses complete in 1935, work continued on the development of Connell's landscape plan until Ashmole's efforts were slowed by his other commitments. Marlow was injured in an accident on the property that left him an amputee and this unfortunate event also weighed heavily on Ashmole (Ashmole, 1994: 61). The maintenance demands of the house and garden became oppressive. After the Ashmoles sold the property, High and Over deteriorated under a succession of owners. The house was divided into two flats in the early 1960s. The garden was built over, although the circular swimming pool remains a feature of the remnant landscape.

The question remains: why would Ashmole trust an untried architect with such an ambitious first project when he had the choice of any practising architect in Britain? Connell was somewhat reticent himself in pinpointing the reason for his client's faith, but the combination of Connell's deep understanding of classical architecture alongside the emergent themes of modernism as seen in France and Germany in the mid-1920s was surely compelling. Connell's colonial pragmatism also appealed to Ashmole, who was used to hard physical work and was no doubt reassured about his architect's practical experience with an unconventional construction medium. Connell's formative experience of architecture has

been viewed as something marginal to the work he would produce in England, the impression being that he somehow had to forget his training and relearn the principles of modernist design. Connell's five years of practical experience in New Zealand took place under a particular set of circumstances that smoothed the transition from Edwardian design values to Corbusian modernism. Unlike many of his English peers, Connell was informed about and experienced in reinforced concrete construction techniques, having worked on sites as a labourer and as part of Fearn's busy practice. Visiting present-day Eltham and viewing the existing architectural fabric of the town leaves little doubt that Connell moved towards early maturity as a designer with a comprehensive understanding of the properties of concrete as a construction medium. When Connell saw Corbusier's Domino system (1914), with its point-load foundations and cast-in floor beams, it cannot have seemed altogether foreign to him. It must have been galling for Connell that no firm in Britain could provide a satisfactory price for monolithic concrete construction on High and Over (Ashmole, 1994: 55) when he had seen buildings of this type successfully and economically built in rural New Zealand.

It is also clear that Connell's training and emergent approach to design favoured the axial symmetry of neo-classical planning that shaped other early British forays into modernism. Connell's conception remained firmly rooted both in the ground and in classical architectural tradition. Connell was attempting moderation between the European avant-garde and the neo-classical English country house, with its cultural connections passing back through Andrea Palladio to the villas of ancient Rome. This dualism has engendered two misunderstandings that are now deeply imbedded in the interpretation of High and Over – firstly, that Connell's effort to bridge the gap between modernism and classicism in the late 1920s was an ill-judged compromise, and secondly, that the design was, relatively speaking, a failure owing to its conservatism. Connell's design certainly contains distinct modernist and conservative modes, but the piecemeal reading of the whole project in terms of disparate parts offers an incomplete and flawed understanding of Connell's intention. Similarly, the segmentation of Connell's career into what has been characterized as a juvenile period of experimentation progressing later into a more 'respectable' modernism misreads High and Over and the richness of its conception as a bridge between classicism and modernism. This reflects a rather well-worn cultural belief that colonials achieve success by ignoring the rules, a personal narrative which Connell and Ward later took up themselves.

Connell's status in architectural history is therefore marked by the simultaneous presence and absence of the expatriate from both cultural spaces. His formative experiences in rural Taranaki and Wellington were both repressive and rich with possibilities, ensuring that when he left the orbit of New Zealand, he did not return. New Zealand was an ideal training ground for architects who would find their skills in demand in Britain, a fact borne out by the presence of so many expatriates during the 1920s and beyond. While most went simply to improve their prospects, some, like Connell, found the timing right to take the lead.

References

Ashmole, B. (1994). *Bernard Ashmole, 1894-1988: An Autobiography*. Malibu: Getty Museum.

Ashmole, P. (2005). E-mail to Michael Findlay (November 27).

Bartle, R. (2006). The House that Jack Built: How One Designer Changed the Face of Hawera and the Dairy Industry Forever. *Taranaki Stories: Business and Industry.* Retrieved November 5, from http://pukeariki.com/en/stories/businessandindustry/default/asp

Benton, C. (1999). Review of Jean-Louis Cohen, L'architecte André Lurçat. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *58*(1), 98-100.

Brown, J. (2000). *The Modern Garden*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Campbell, L. (1989). A Call To Order: The Rome Prize and Early Twentieth Century British Architecture. *Architectural History*, (32), 131-51.

Connell, A. (1926). Telegram to Evelyn Shaw (November 14). Copy on B. R. Ward File, The British School at Rome (BSR) Archive, Rome.

Connell, A. (1927). Application for Renewal of Scholarship at The British School at Rome. A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

Connell, A. (1928). Application for Renewal of Scholarship at The British School at Rome. A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

Connell, A. (1929). Letter to A. Hamilton Smith (December 29). A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

Connell & Thomson (1929). Proposed House at Amersham, Buckinghamshire. Plans and elevations. RIBA Library, London, Ref. ON3121.

Connell & Ward (1934). High and Over Estate, Station Road, Amersham, Bucks. Proposed layout of first section. Plan. RIBA Library, Ref. ON3122.

Connell, J. (1985). Pers. comm. to M. Findlay (June).

Esau, R. (1994). Connell, Ward and Lucas and the Emergence of the British Modern Movement in Architecture. Unpublished Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Bryn Mawr College, Philadelphia.

Giovenco, A. (2005). Pers. comm. to M. Findlay (November 12).

Imbert, D. (1993). *The Modernist Garden in France*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Item 54, NZIA Minute Book Articles 1916-1940, p. 8. NZIA Archives, J. C. Beaglehole Room, Victoria University of Wellington.

Item 57, NZIA Minute Book Articles 1916-40, p. 65. NZIA Archives.

Jones, M. W. (2000). *Principles of Roman Architecture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

New Zealand Institute of Architects Wellington Branch Competition for War Memorial (1921). *New Zealand Building Progress*, *XVII*(1), 12-13.

News and Topics (1926). *Architects' Journal*, *LXIII*(June 30), 872.

Notes (1922). *New Zealand Institute of Architects Journal*, *1*(3), 75.

Personal (1926, November 18). *Otago Daily Times*, p. 10.

Robertson, H. (1931). Amoenitas: 'High and Over' at Amersham. Architect A. D. Connell. *Architect and Building News*, *CXXVI*(June 26), 428-35.

Sharp, D. (Ed.) (1994). *Connell, Ward and Lucas*. London: Book Art.

Sharples, J., Powers, A., & Shippobottom, M. (Eds.). (1996). *Charles Reilly & The Liverpool School of Architecture, 1904-1933*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Shaw, E. (1925). Letter to A. Connell. A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

Shaw, E. (1926). Letter to A Connell (June 29). A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

Shaw, E. (1927). Letter to unknown recipient (September 19). A. Connell File, BSR Archive, Ref. H27.

Shaw, E. (1928). Letter to B. Ashmole (July 15). A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

Shaw, E. (1929). Letter to A. Hamilton Smith (January 15). A. Connell File, BSR Archive.

South Taranaki District Council (2000). Wilkinson's Building, 150 High St, 1913-1914 (Item H1). *Eltham Heritage Inventory*. Hawera: s.p.

Thomson, S. L. (1939). Form of Application for Admission as a Fellow. RIBA Library, Ref. 3673.

Thistlewood, D., & Heeley, E. (1997). Connell, Ward and Lucas: Towards a Complex Critique. *Journal of Architecture*, 2(1), 83-102.

Untitled (1921), *New Zealand Building Progress*, *XVII*(4), 86.

Vitou, E. (2006). Guévrékian, Gabriel. *Grove Art Online*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved November, 23, from http://www.groveart.com/

Walker, C. (Ed.). (2005). *Exquisite Apart: 100 Years of Architecture in New Zealand*. Auckland: Balasoglou Books.

Ward, B. (1967). Connell, Ward and Lucas. In D. Sharp (Ed.), *Planning and Architecture: Essays Presented to Arthur Korn by the Architectural Association* (pp. 73-86). London: Barry & Rocliffe.

Further Investigations
into an Authorship: Reassessing the Dixon Street Flats Archive

Robin Skinner

I thank Bill Alington, Ken Davis, Julia Gatley, Monika Knofler, Andrew Leach, John Saker and Linda Tyler for their helpful advice and discussion.

The identity of the principal designers of the Dixon Street State Flats in Wellington remains controversial. In some circles it is held that it was designed by the émigré Austrian, Ernst Plischke,[1] while others suggest that it is the work of the chief architect of the Department of Housing Construction (DHC), Gordon Wilson.[2] Without an explicit reference, certain attribution has not been possible. Reputed scholars have successively stated differing and at times controversial positions. This is not surprising because there is a lot at stake. Ascribing authorship brings focus upon significant issues relating to the introduction of modernism in New Zealand (Gatley, 1995); however, this is not the focus of this paper. Instead, I review the scholars' positions, re-examine the archival record and identify further evidence in order to argue that Plischke's involvement was highly significant.

Background to the Project

The DHC was established in late 1936 to provide rental housing for a population emerging from the throes of the Great Depression (Fig. 1). In addition to designing the detached state houses of the 1930s and 40s, the DHC designed thirteen large blocks of flats beginning with the Berhampore Flats, Wellington, designed by Gordon Wilson (Gatley, 1997: 89).

Fig. 1

Fig. 1: Draughting staff at the DHC, Dominion Farmers Building, Wellington, 1940s. Photographer: W. Hall Raine. AALF 6112, 24/2/1, 830, Archives NZ/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Wellington.

1. Ernst Anton Plischke (1903-92). For biographical information, see Tyler (2000).

2. Francis Gordon Wilson (1900-59). For biographical information, see Gatley (2000). He was, and is, often referred to as 'Gordon F. Wilson'.

In May 1939, the Austrian architect Ernst Plischke, his Jewish wife, Anna, and her son Heinrich went to New Zealand as refugees. Plischke had trained under Oskar Strnad and Peter Behrens and had worked for Behrens and Josef Frank in Vienna and for Jacques Ely Kahn in New York. Plischke had designed several significant projects in Austria which had been published internationally. It is unsurprising, then, that once in New Zealand the architect was swiftly employed by Wilson at the DHC. However, in line with Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) policy, the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) did not recognize Plischke's architectural qualifications and he was employed as a draughtsman.

When Plischke arrived, work on the Berhampore Flats was underway. Design had commenced in 1938 and this scheme of 50 apartments was completed in 1940. As Gatley notes, these flats can be interpreted as a transitional development that bridges the existing Georgian detached tradition of the conventional state house with that of the International Style (Gatley, 1996: 54). While the flat-roof aesthetic was modern, the planning of the units was similar to the standard state house. Occupant density of the one- to three-storeyed scheme was between that of detached suburban housing and the later multi-storeyed blocks of the DHC.

With 116 apartments in a substantial multi-storeyed block, the Dixon Street Flats were a more ambitious scheme. Archival records indicate that:

- The site was acquired in February 1940.
- Drawings were being prepared by March 1940.
- Working drawings are dated September 1940.
- The contract was let on 30 December 1940.
- Construction commenced early the following year.
- With war slowing progress, the building was formally opened on 4 September 1943.
- The final completion certificate was issued on 26 June 1944.

As is well documented, relations between Plischke and Wilson were strained. Wilson was domineering and he freely amended the designs that his staff produced (Noonan, 1975: 223). While Plischke described being severely circumscribed and professionally suppressed in the office, the relationship between Wilson and Plischke was complex and there is evidence that Wilson took the émigré's suggestions into account (Plischke, 1969: 127; Tyler, 1986: 42-43). Wilson may have been somewhat threatened by the sophisticated, articulate and worldly architect, yet at times he showed him significant support. Wilson gave Plischke a copy of J. M. Richards' *Modern Architecture* (1940) when he found the Austrian mentioned in its pages (Plischke, 1989: 247). In the late 1940s, Wilson reputedly spoke to a branch meeting of the NZIA for Plischke's admission to the institute (Dawson, 1991b: 9). In early 1947, Wilson wrote, what appears to be, a glowing reference supporting Plischke's application for the position of professor at Auckland University College (AUC); although, arguably, this document can be seen to contain traces of ambivalence.[3]

3. It is a perplexing document. With statements such as, "I have the highest regard for his ability as an architect and town planner and for his manner of arousing enthusiasm in all those associated with him", Wilson's reference appears to be very supportive. However, he made no explicit recommendation for appointment. Instead, he advised that Plischke's application be given "very careful consideration" because he doubted that there was a more suitable person available (Wilson, 1947). Today, such comment would be read as a coded statement communicating concern and reservation. While Davis saw this reference indicating Wilson's "enormous respect" (Davis, 1987: 29), I think it may indicate ambivalence.

Competing Views on Authorship

For over 60 years the Dixon Street project has been attributed to Gordon Wilson, to Ernst Plischke or to the DHC architects collectively. One official account from September 1943 records:

> The Architects of the Department of Housing Construction made many studies of the problem before the design was finalized. It has been their aim to develop a multi-unit block scheme that would provide the advantages that flat-planning makes possible, without the disadvantages. (DHC, 1943: 37)

Other publications made reference to either "architects", "the Department of Housing Construction", "Gordon Wilson for the New Zealand State Housing Department" or "Gordon F. Wilson, supervising architect" (One Hundred Homes, 1944: 20; Dixon Street Flats, 1943: 20; Archer, 1942: 55; Two Apartment Houses, 1946: 69). When the NZIA honoured the project with their Gold Medal for 1947, they awarded it to "G.F. Wilson as the Architect to Housing Branch (PWD)" (NZIA, 1948b: 12).

After this, Wilson's name was more strongly associated with the project; however, some outside the DHC held that Plischke was the designer. In the mid-1940s, the Under Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, Joe Heenan (who held Plischke in great respect), had the impression that the project was the work of the Austrian, although during 1948 he was corrected that it was Wilson's work. Writing to the Timaru architect, Percy Watts Rule, who had been campaigning to have Plischke admitted to the NZIA, Heenan noted this reattribution while stating that the McLean Flats on The Terrace, Wellington, were by Plischke.[4] He did not name the source of this new information, although it was obviously one he judged reliable.

Some of Plischke's most fervent advocates were Wellington intellectuals, émigrés and students. In 1950s New Zealand, aesthetic sophisticates were easy to identify: they possessed copies of his 1947 publication, *Design and Living*. It was also eagerly read by young architects, many of whom attended his lectures.[5] An advance excerpt was included in the first and only issue of *Planning: the magazine of the architectural group*, of 1946. Students in particular championed Plischke. They protested at AUC when he was not appointed professor in 1947 (Wild, 1991), and students at Victoria University College (VUC) campaigned to have him design a new student association building (Barrowman, 1999: 312; VUC Minutes, 1947: 121, 165). Many of these people continued to connect Plischke's name with the Dixon Street project.

In 1963, at the time of Plischke's departure for a professorship at the *Akademie der bildenden Künste* in Vienna, Wellington architect George Porter (who had worked with Plischke at the DHC in the mid-1940s) attempted to correct the supposed misperception that the Austrian had designed Dixon Street. He wrote:

> Here [in the DHC] he worked under the late Gordon Wilson, a man of strong personality. It was perhaps unfortunate that a clash of personalities and the anonymity one assumes as a public servant caused his work during this period to be absorbed into the general mass of that done by the department.

4. Heenan wrote, "Further to our recent correspondence regarding Plischke, I now find that in one regard I have done friend Wilson of State Housing an injustice. I was under the impression that Plischke had done the design of the Dixon Street Flats for which the Gold Medal was awarded. This is not right. He did the subsequent Terrace Flats [the McLean block], Wilson being a man responsible for Dixon Street" (Heenan, 1948b). Plischke's drawings of an early McLean Flats scheme are held in the Plischke-Archiv, Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna.

5. In 1945, 235 people enrolled to hear his ten lectures on Home Design and Decoration at the Wellington WEA (Shearer, 1947).

> But his influence was strong. It is believed that he [Plischke] was the original designer of the Dixon Street Flats, though the final design was not his. (Porter, 1963)

Writing ten years later, John Saker (who had grown up with a copy of *Design and Living* in his family home) also acknowledged the rivalry between Plischke and Wilson. He noted that sometimes Plischke's drawings "would be passed across a dozen other desks and altered at each before being considered complete." He added, "In this way, the design for Wellington's Dixon Street Flats, though basically Ernst Plischke's won a gold medal for Gordon Wilson" (Saker, 1985: 59-60).

In researching her 1986 MA dissertation on Plischke, Linda Tyler interviewed the architect, documenting his account of events. She referred to "Plischke's Dixon Street Flats", stating that it was:

> … Plischke's only major Housing Department design to be built largely according to his conception; it was altered only slightly with flower-boxes being provided for each unit, and applied to the front façade of the block in a manner that seems apologetic for the severity of the form. (Tyler, 1986: 49)

She continued, "Dixon Street was a success for Plischke, although he received no credit personally for the design" (Tyler, 1986: 51). She footnoted that "The 'EAP' signature was removed from the designs after submission to the main draughting room. Plischke had copies of the original drawings made which are held in his archive, Vienna" (Tyler, 1986: 52). She accepted this alleged erasure, without considering standard government draughting practice.[6] Title blocks listed the initials of those who produced the working drawing, traced the drawing onto film or linen, added amendments to the sheet at a later date and checked the drawing for errors. It was standard that the principal name would be that of the head of department. If drawings were copied from a preliminary sheet, the subsequent draughtsperson would include their own initials without reference to the author of the earlier study. It seems likely that this is what happened to early studies for the Dixon Street apartment block. In 1991, the architectural historian Peter Shaw repeated Tyler's assertions in his history of New Zealand architecture (Shaw, 1991c: 143).

Plischke did not include the Dixon Street project in his 1969 monograph, although he did in those of 1983 and 1989 (Piechl, 1983: 102; Plischke, 1989: 248-49). In this last work, Plischke commented, "In Dixon Street in Wellington baute mein Department den ersten kontinental-europäischen Block von Wohnungen. (In Dixon Street, Wellington my department built the first continental European block of dwellings)" (Plischke, 1989: 249). This magisterial reference to "my department" has further fuelled doubts about the soundness of his claim for an involvement in the project.

The 1989 monograph prompted Shaw to write a substantial journal article in 1991, stating that "it was ironical that Plischke's Dixon Street Flats (1943) were to win Gordon Wilson, as head of department, an NZIA Gold Medal and that Plischke's design was further adapted when the Gordon Wilson Flats were built on The Terrace in 1952" (Shaw, 1991a: 64). Several retired architects responded with memories of Plischke and discussed why he was not admitted to the institute, although none commented on the Dixon Street apartment block issue (Dawson, 1991a; Dawson, 1991b; Reynolds, 1991; Wild, 1991).

6. Jim Dawson made this point. See E. V. Dawson (1996).

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 2: Graham Dawson at the DHC, 1940s. Photographer: W. Hall Raine. AALF 6112, 24/2/1/21, 832, Archives NZ/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Wellington.

Fig. 3: E. A. Plischke, Exterior perspective of the Dixon Street apartment block. Plischke-Archiv, Vienna, Nr 30.888.

In his 1987 BArch research report on Gordon Wilson's work (where he sourced drawings, files, articles and interviews), Ken Davis included memories of a former DHC and Ministry of Works architect, Graham Dawson (Fig. 2). Dawson recounted:

> So far as I can recall Berhampore, Dixon St. and Grey's Ave were mainly Wilson's. Symonds St was mainly Nieumann[7] (*sic*).... I do not think Plischke was involved much in Greys Av. Flats and I think Dixon St was designed before he joined the team. Plischke (with whom I shared a room in Dominion Farmers Bldg for a year or two) was engaged on new house types, 2 to 6 unit housing, shopping and community centres, site layouts imaginatively aimed at comfortable communities.... (G. F. Dawson, 1987: 3-4) [Dawson's underlining]

Dawson roundly added, "However, in discussions with the team and with Wilson, Plischke's influence must have been considerable." Davis interpreted this account with reservation. Delivering a very sound, thorough analysis of the composition of the Dixon Street complex, he drew a more even-tempered verdict on Plischke's involvement:

> Since the working drawings were not completed until September 1940 and Plischke arrived in New Zealand in May 1939 ... it is probable therefore that he had some months to be involved in the sketch design. However the apparent lack of purity, a tendency uncharacteristic of Plischke, suggests the eclectic hand of Wilson.
>
> Given Wilson's propensity to change design at will, it is likely that Plischke did the original design, with alterations made later... (Davis, 1987: 35-36)

In the mid-1990s, as part of research for her MArch dissertation on New Zealand state rental flats between 1935 and 1949, Julia Gatley investigated archival sources to establish Plischke's involvement (Gatley, 1995; Gatley, 1997: 121-2, 159-60). Researching government files and reports, newspapers, journals, architectural drawings and interviews, she could find no clear evidence for Plischke's involvement. She reported that, apart from an exterior perspective shown in Fig. 3 (which she dated at 1942, after the project's design) and some working drawings reproduced in Antony Matthews' sub-thesis (which he also dated at 1942), she found no Dixon Street drawings by Plischke[8] (Matthews, 1986: Appendix

7. The Austrian-born Frederick Hugh Newman né Frederick Hugo Neumann (1900-64) also worked at the DHC. For information on Newman, see Leach (2003: 8-21).

8. These working drawings from September 1940 were not drawn by Plischke.

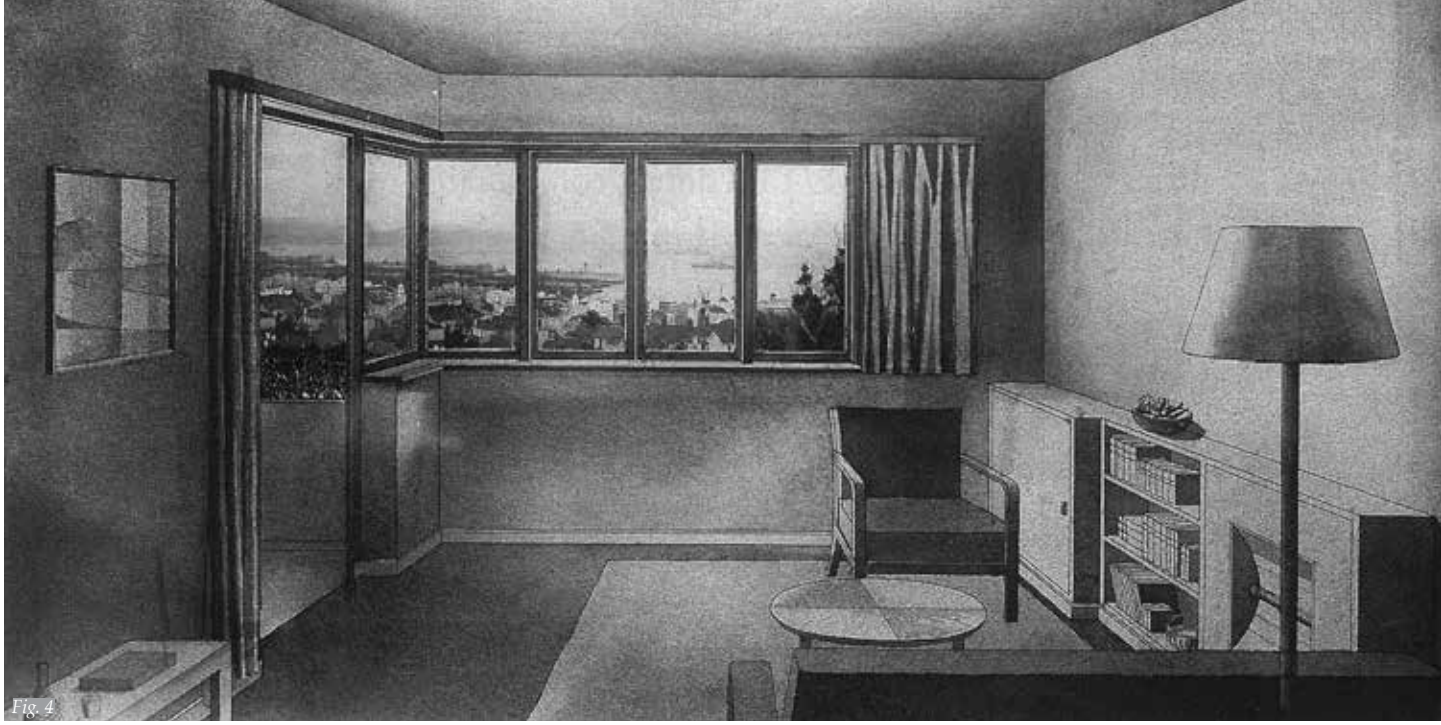


Fig. 4

C; Gatley, 1997: 153-54, 157). Unable to locate his name on any files or in any contemporary publications, she suggested there was no conclusive evidence of his design input. She supported this view citing: architect, Jim Beard, who had heard Wilson claim the building as his own; Ester Einhorn, who was married to an architect employed by the government; and architect, Graham Dawson. Of these sources, only Dawson worked in the DHC office at the time of the design and his recounting of events is therefore crucial.

Writing on the Dixon Street project in his and Eva Ottillinger's monograph, August Sarnitz acknowledged the uncertainty over the authorship (Sarnitz & Ottillinger, 2004: 143, 148). He remained circumspect, writing that the designer's identity remains unclear, although he ascribed drawings and photographs of the project to "Ernst Plischke in the Department of Housing Construction" (Sarnitz & Ottillinger, 2004: 143-48). When the *Ernst Plischke Architect* exhibition was mounted at the Wellington City Gallery in 2004, locally supplied photographs of the building were shown although no drawings were included.[9]

In the entry Tyler wrote on Plischke for the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* and in an essay she wrote to accompany the 2004 exhibition, she made no explicit reference to the Dixon Street project (Tyler, 2000; Tyler, 2004b). However, she discussed the project in another essay that she wrote in the Building Research Association of New Zealand magazine, *Build*. With respect to his involvement in the design of the Dixon Street Flats, she stated that, while working for the government, he spearheaded the design of the government apartment blocks, and she further observed that his influence is evident in the Dixon Street interior and exterior working drawings of September 1940. She discussed his recently published interior perspective of a Dixon Street apartment (Fig. 4) (Sarnitz & Ottillinger, 2004: 144; Tyler, 2004a: 32).

Fig. 4: E. A. Plischke, Interior perspective of a Dixon Street apartment, ca. 1940. Plischke-Archiv, Nr 30.996.

9. The exhibition was presented by the NZIA and ran from 5 September-28 November 2004. I thank Gregory O'Brien for supplying caption lists from this exhibition.

Some New Evidence

In the early stages of the project, records of the design are limited although it appears that a scheme for the Dixon Street site was publicly displayed at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition which opened in November 1939. This monolithic slab with a symmetrically stepped parapet line (Fig. 5) appears awkward and ungainly and shows little of the project's later elegance. There appears to be a significant shift from this design to the project that was subsequently constructed. In March 1940, it was reported that drawings were being prepared;

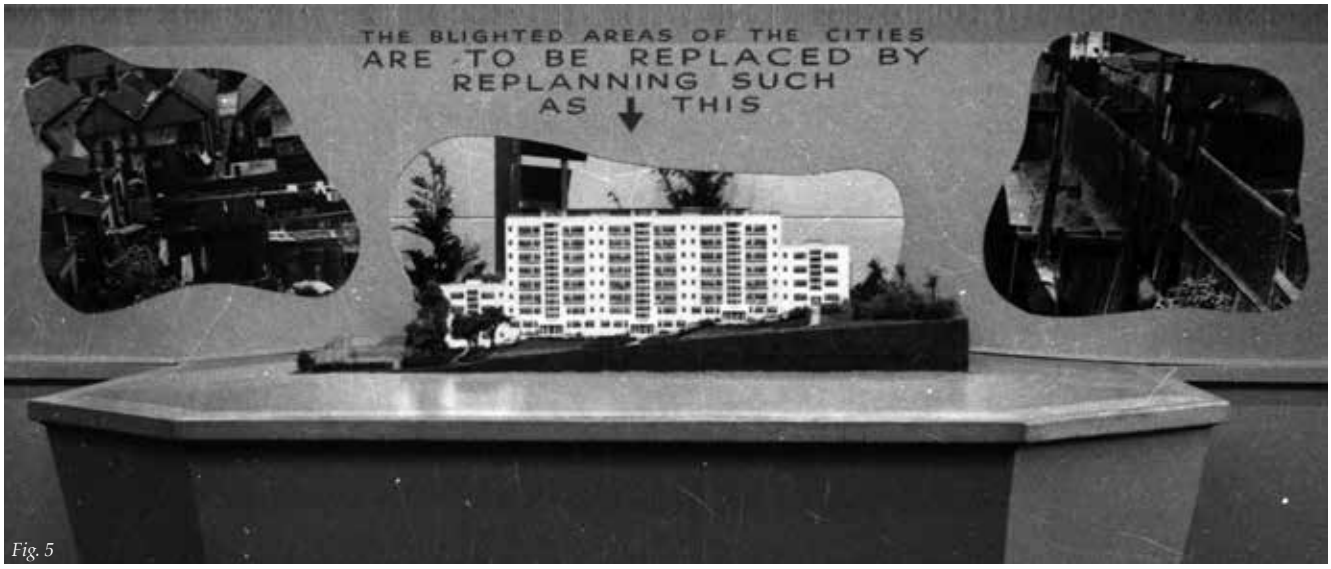


Fig. 5

Fig. 5: Dixon Street apartment model displayed at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition 1939-1940. Photographer: W. Hall Raine. AALF 6112, 24/3, 984, Archives NZ/Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, Wellington.

however, none of these remains. The file record is not helpful. Because the first three parts have not survived, the extant record begins at June 1944 with the project completion certificate.[10] Comparison with other DHC flat files suggests that if the earlier Dixon Street files had survived, it is unlikely that they would record the early sketch design phases of the project.[11]

Plischke certainly worked on the project to some extent. Sometime in 1940, prior to the preparation of the working drawings, he produced the previously mentioned exterior perspective (Fig. 3). Although Plischke dated this project at 1942 (Piechl, 1983: 102; Plischke, 1989: 248), a Wellington newspaper published the image as "the architect's perspective" in October 1940 (Block of Flats, 1940: 9, 12).[12] Comparison of this perspective with the working drawings of September 1940, and with Plischke's account of events, helps in tracing the project's development. After the Centennial Exhibition model there must have been a monolithic scheme without balconies. The working drawings include two amendments to the scheme shown in the 1940 perspective which are reminiscent of the detailing on the Berhampore Flats: the small rectangular balconies on the south façade were reshaped to a semi-circular plan and the building's south-west corner appears right-angled in the perspective but was later curved. Although it is not certain, the entrance canopy also looks to be more rectilinear than that constructed.[13]

When Plischke returned to Vienna in 1963, he took a print of the perspective, signing it in ink.[14] Coupled with his drawing of an apartment interior (Fig. 4), it seems likely that these were the drawings that he copied after his name was removed. The other Dixon Street drawings in the Plischke-Archiv are two working drawings of plans and sections of the entrance foyer, although neither bears his initials. That he retained them may indicate his involvement with this part of the project.[15] Further research may be fruitful.

Regulating Lines

In his research report on Gordon Wilson, Ken Davis annotated the block's elevation with some 'regulating lines' showing how the composition can be interpreted as a system of proportional rectangles (Davis, 1987: 117; Davis, 2008).

10. 'Dixon Street Flats', HD W1353 124/10/2 Pt 4, Archives NZ, Wellington.

11. Cf. 'McLean Block Flats', HD W1353 10/426/1, Archives NZ, Wellington. The SAC file 35/152/3 pt 1 begins with a memo of tender prices dated 20 December 1940.

12. Plischke's perspective was also published in the *Architectural Review* article of 1942 (Archer, 1942: 55).

13. The constructed curved entrance steps also seem inconsistent with the aesthetic spirit of the perspective.

14. The print also includes some vegetation, drawn onto it in pencil. It is signed at the lower right although this signature is not reproduced in publications (Knofler, 2008b).

15. These are working drawings dated September 1940, drawn by RAB (Bob Barton) and checked GFW (Gordon Wilson) (Knofler, 2008a).

Fig. 6

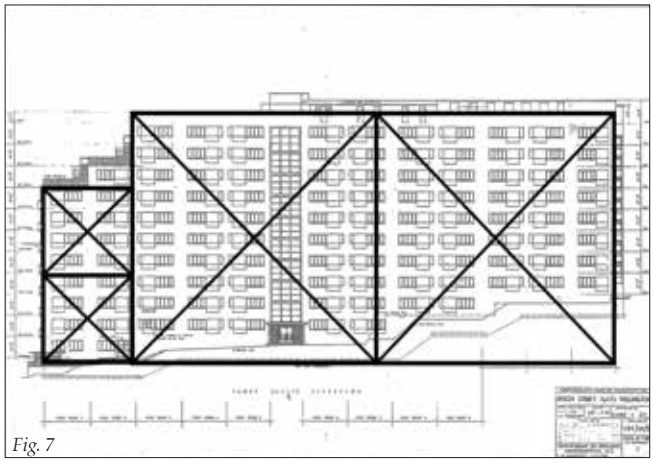


Fig. 7

Davis appears to infer that the use of regulating lines on the east elevation of Dixon Street indicated Gordon Wilson's concern for the composition and proportion of the elevation. I have found little evidence of this proportion system in Wilson's other work at Berhampore and in his own house in Karori (1940).[16] This system is in obvious accord with Le Corbusier's 'tracés régulateurs' presented in the fourth chapter of *Vers une Architecture* (1923). In 1984, Plischke told Tyler of the book's momentous impact on his work (Sarnitz & Ottillinger, 2004: 258).[17]

Regulating lines superimposed on the principal façade of the Dixon Street block show how similar rectangles may have been used to determine the step-down point in the parapet (Fig. 6). This analysis takes account of the sloping terrain of the site. Plischke also made use of a 2x1 proportion system,[18] which determines the parapet drop (Fig. 7). Where the first analysis takes account of terrain, the other takes account of the void above the southern lower section. Both establish the consistent step-down point that acts as a fulcrum about which the proportional blocks, discernible within the building's elevation, maintain equilibrium.

Plischke appears to have used a combination of regulating lines and squares in other projects. For example, his elevation of the employment centre at Liesing (1930-31) reveals a set of similar proportional relationships that determine the composition of the façade (Fig. 8). He drew the parallel diagonals to emphasize and to communicate these relationships, noting that "The proportions of the elevation are controlled by a common diagonal" (Plischke, 1969: 12). The elevation outline corresponds to a 4x1 rectangle. Analysis of the plan further indicates that he used a system of regulating lines and squares to determine some of the spatial arrangement (Fig. 9). Similar proportional systems are also found in Plischke's other work, including the Henderson House at Alexandra in the South Island (1950) (Figs. 10 and 11).

Analysis of other DHC apartment blocks reveals that the facades of the Greys Avenue Flats were also determined by systems of regulating lines and squares (Fig. 12).[19] The working drawings were mostly produced by the recent graduate George Porter in August-September 1944, while the concept drawings date from 1941 (Gatley, 1997: 213). There are differences of opinion about who designed the block in the initial stages.[20] The other large government apartment blocks do not show regulating lines. I have not found them with the Berhampore, McLean or Hansen Street Flats, or with F. H. Newman's Symonds Street block.[21] While these analyses do not decisively identify Plischke as the designer, they support the

Fig. 6: Regulating lines superimposed on the east elevation of the Dixon Street Flats. Gatley, 1997: 153; regulating lines added by Robin Skinner.

Fig. 7: A 2x1 proportion system also determines the parapet drop. Gatley, 1997: 153; squares added by Robin Skinner.

16. I have found a somewhat inconclusive regulating line relationship between the living room and the meals area in Wilson's own Karori house plan (Designed to Catch the Sun, 1943). Wilson's later extension for the house does not show this kind of relationship at all (Family House, 1951).

17. On Plischke and Le Corbusier, see Sarnitz & Ottillinger (2004: 47-49).

18. According to Bill Alington, Frederick Newman also worked on a system of double squares (Alington, 2008). Josef Frank also used this system.

19. I thank Andrew Leach for suggesting this line of enquiry. This finding may not suggest that Plischke necessarily worked on the Greys Avenue Flats, but rather that the Dixon Street design strategy had impacted upon the Auckland project.

20. Dawson told Davis that they were mostly by Wilson (G. F. Dawson, 1987: 3). He told me that they were by Wilson and himself "to an extent". (G. F. Dawson, 1994a). Frederick (Fritz) Farrar could have been involved as well.

21. In a paper discussing, amongst other things, scale, rhythm and proportion, Newman mentioned the golden section but made no reference to regulating lines (1952: 72-73).

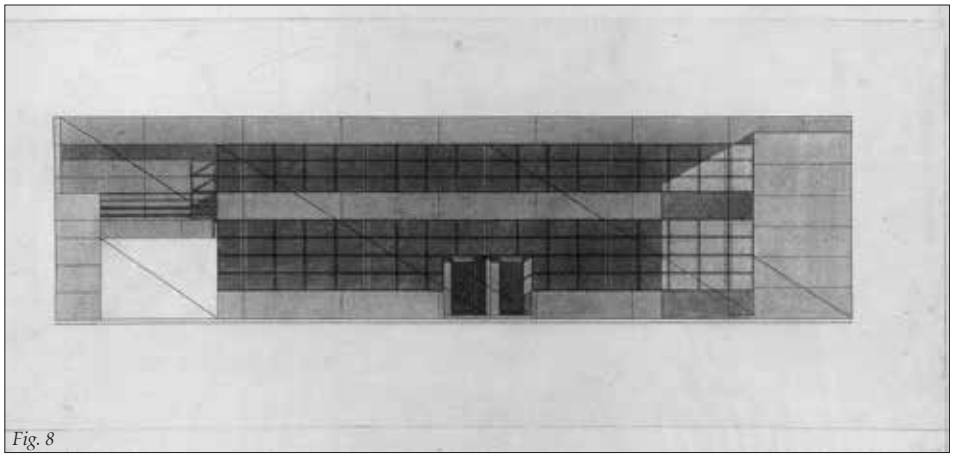


Fig. 8

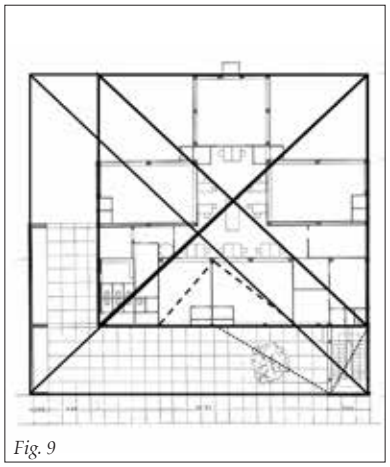


Fig. 9

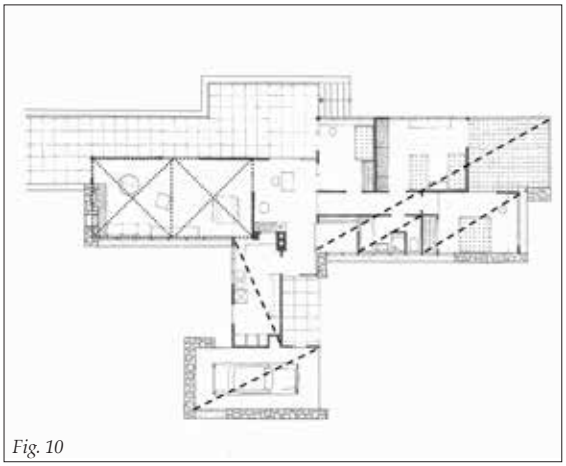


Fig. 10

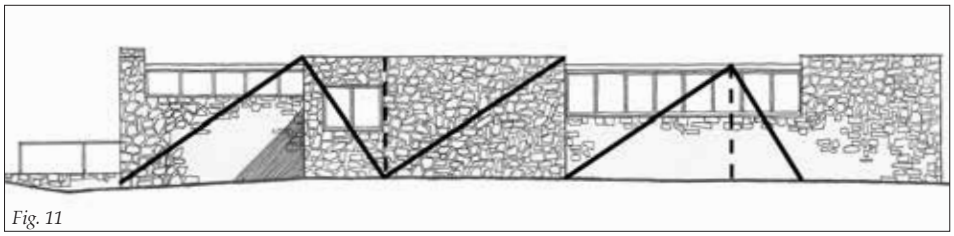


Fig. 11

Fig. 8: Labour Exchange, Liesing (1930-31). Plischke-Archiv, Nr 30.419.

Fig. 9: Regulating lines and square geometries determine the planning of the Labour Exchange. Plischke, 1969: 71; regulating lines added by Robin Skinner.

Figs. 10 and 11: Henderson House, Alexandra (1950). Plischke, 1969: 154; regulating lines added by Robin Skinner.

claim that he exerted significant involvement or influence in the Dixon Street and Greys Avenue scheme designs. This accords with Davis' earlier-stated verdict on Plischke's contribution to the Dixon Street design.

Plischke and the NZIA

Plischke's difficult relationship with the NZIA is also relevant in interpreting the various comments made by Graham Dawson. As is widely known, Plischke never joined the NZIA because he would not condescend to sit an examination that he deemed inferior to those he had sat in Austria. In 1939, the issue of refugee architects was discussed by the institute's Executive with the decision reached that only people who would qualify for membership of the RIBA could qualify in New Zealand (NZIA Minutes, 5 Jul. 1939). A year later, it was moved that refugee architects could not sit the institute's special examination until they became naturalized British citizens (NZIA Minutes, 6 Nov. 1940). In response to a request for clarification, the RIBA informed the NZIA that they did not recognize foreign certificates and instead asked that candidates provide evidence

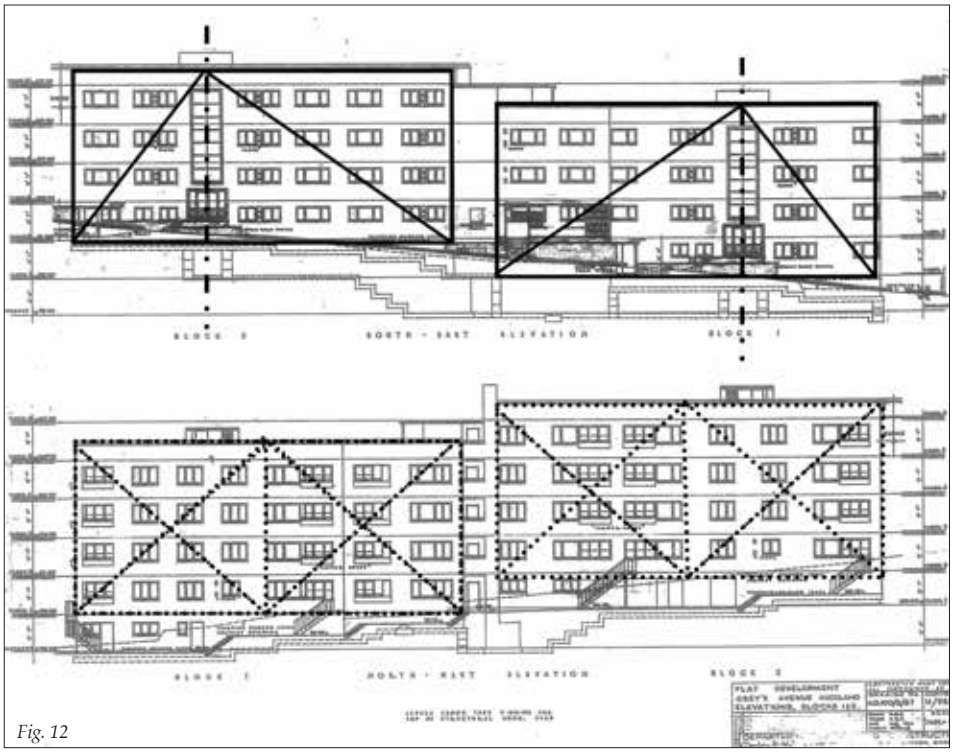


Fig. 12

Fig. 12: The Greys Avenue Flats elevations appear to be determined by regulating lines and a 2x1 proportional geometry. Gatley, 1997: 214; regulating lines added by Robin Skinner.

of work, together with certificates and their respective syllabi. They added that complete exemption from all examinations had not been granted on the strength of a foreign diploma or certificate (NZIA Minutes, 17 Oct. 1946). In early 1947, the NZIA Education Committee passed a resolution that refugee architects should sit all papers in the institute's special examination (NZIA Minutes, 29 Jan. 1947).

Minutes from meetings of the NZIA Executive include several discussions specifically relating to the possibility of Plischke's admission to the institute in the 1940s. As noted earlier, in the late 1940s Percy Watts Rule lobbied for Plischke's admission to the institute "on account of his high qualifications" (NZIA Minutes, 17 Dec. 1947).[22] The matter was turned over to the next Annual Meeting where it was moved that the nominee be advised to apply by the usual channels (NZIA, 1948a).[23] After that meeting, when Watts Rule wrote asking what steps should be taken to have Plischke admitted, he was instructed to apply in the usual way, citing the appropriate section of the institute's regulations (NZIA Minutes, 30 Jun. 1948). Watts Rule also wrote to Heenan asking him to exert his influence in Wellington (Rule, 1948). Heenan replied that the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, was much taken aback that the institute insisted on Plischke sitting an examination (Heenan, 1948a). In reality, the institute could have admitted Plischke under a little-used regulation that awarded membership to a person who had "in the opinion of the [institute's] Council attained great eminence in the profession of architecture" (NZIA Act, 1913: Sec 8.1.i). In line with the RIBA lead, the Executive resisted doing so.[24]

The institute hierarchy also considered other issues relating to Plischke. In February 1947, the Council discussed the professorial position at AUC which Plischke was applying for, although the nature of their discussion can only be speculated upon. The garbled minutes record:

22. The grounds for admission were recorded in the written minutes as "by virtue of a nominee holding a foreign diploma" (NZIA, 1948a). The matter was not reported in the written minutes (NZIA, 1948b).

23. Ironically this was the meeting where Wilson was awarded the institute's Gold Medal.

24. On Plischke and NZIA membership, see E. V. Dawson (1996).

> Mr Dawson mentioned the appointment of a Professor of Design to the Auckland University College. Mr Massey said that when the Institute had a member on the Faculty of Architecture he would be in touch with the School of Architecture and he would be able to submit to the Education Committee similar suggestions. The Institute could only advise the University on appointments. (NZIA, 1947: 51)

Later in 1948, possibly referring to Plischke's earlier work in the government service, the Canterbury Branch of the NZIA wrote complaining that community centres, which were being developed as war memorials, were being designed by unqualified men (NZIA Minutes, 25 Aug. 1948). The Executive responded, quoting a ministerial circular that indicated that these plans were merely for guidance and information, and that local councils should "engage experts" themselves (NZIA Minutes, 8 Sep. 1948) [their underlining]. This may partly explain why none of Plischke's community centres was built.

In 1949, when Plischke was asked to design a writing desk as the wedding present from the people of New Zealand for Princess Elizabeth and Prince Phillip, the Executive complained to the Prime Minister that "it was regrettable that the Government entrusted the designing of such a token of loyalty to one who was not a natural born New Zealander of British origin" (NZIA Minutes, 6 Apr. 1949). The Prime Minister responded that the designer was a New Zealand citizen at the time of appointment (NZIA Minutes, 13 Jul. 1949).

That same year, following the earlier lobbying by the VUC students to have Plischke design their (now stalled) student union, the institute's Executive expressed concern to the college Registrar that an unregistered architect was being considered for the project, provoking doubts over the availability of government building subsidy, should he be appointed (NZIA Minutes, 29 Jun. 1949; VUC Minutes, 1949: 127, 1950: 90, 1952: 160). This alert was spurious, because in 1947 Plischke had left government service and gone into partnership with registered architect, Cedric Firth. In 1953, upon the advice of the retired Government Architect, R. A. Patterson,[25] the job was awarded to Structon Group Architects (Barrowman, 1999: 312).

It is not known if Plischke was aware of all of the NZIA discussions, although he almost certainly would have understood the institute's culture.[26] While the position regarding the wedding present was obviously xenophobic and was possibly personally motivated, the principal issue could have been easily resolved: if Plischke had sat the NZIA's special examination or the RIBA's examination, he would not have had such a troubled relationship with the institute. Other émigrés such as Porsolt and Newman sat examinations and worked as officially recognized architects. Plischke's pride did not help in these matters. As far as the institute members were concerned, they were simply upholding their rules. Here it is pertinent to recall that, in response to Shaw's 1991 article, retired architect Ian Reynolds wrote, "Smug and self-satisfied the local community might have appeared to be, but it was much too innocent to be devious" (Reynolds, 1991).

The Executive of the NZIA had about eight members. At most of its meetings of the late 1940s and at the Annual Meeting of 1948, Graham Dawson and L. E. Brooker (who was the chief architect at the State Advances Corporation – the government department that administered state housing) were present. There

25. In 1952, Gordon Wilson succeeded Patterson as Government Architect in the Ministry of Works.

26. Heenan informed Plischke of Watts Rule's "battling" at the 1948 AGM in Dunedin, for which Wilson wrote that Plischke was "deeply grateful" (Heenan, 1948b).

is no indication in the minutes if they voted for or against Plischke. In later life, Dawson described Plischke as "a sensitive soul" and downplayed his involvement with the flats (G. F. Dawson, 1987; G. F. Dawson, 1994b).[27] My impression is that Plischke and Dawson's relationship was complex and problematic, and that this must be taken into account when considering his recollections.[28] To my knowledge this has not been explicitly identified by any earlier writer.

In conclusion, in this survey of the archival record, new evidence has been presented that supports the claim that Plischke had a significant involvement with the design of the Dixon Street block. The design process took a noticeable shift about the time that he joined the office and, significantly, the final project exhibits some of the particular compositional strategies that he rigorously employed in his other work. Rather than being taken as a snapshot of the final design, his exterior perspective has been re-dated from 1942 to 1940 and identified as a key document that helps trace the development of the project. Furthermore, I have presented evidence that complicates our understanding of his contemporaries' recollections, which has hitherto not been considered.

Plischke's part in the design of the Dixon Street Flats did not make the official record. While his early input is clearly discernible, from the working drawings onwards he appears to have been kept off the job. He was assigned no task where his name would be explicitly recorded. Given that Plischke's influence was fundamental, this absence becomes especially intriguing. Rather than interpret this as a sign of detachment, it may indicate that his participation was crucial. Acknowledgement of even a minor contribution by Plischke would have left a discernible trace of his input, which could have challenged the formally assigned authorship to the chief architect. This may be why his name was not recorded in the official record.

27. I telephoned Dawson once in 1994, principally to discuss the work of the Auckland City Council architect, T. K. Donner. Our conversation continued for some time. My notes indicate that he described Plischke as a "sensitive soul" and when I asked about the Dixon Street block, he said "Plischke worked on for a …", before breaking off in mid-sentence (G. F. Dawson, 1994a).

28. In 1968, when the Wellington Branch of the NZIA learnt that Plischke, by then resident in Vienna, was visiting New Zealand the following year, they recommended unanimously that he should be made an Honorary Fellow of the Institute. As NZIA President, Graham Dawson hosted a luncheon in the Austrian's honour (NZIA, 1968).

References

Alington, W. H. (2008). Pers. comm. to R. Skinner (March 9).

Archer, H. C. (1942). New Zealand Architecture. *Architectural Review, 91*(March), 52-58.

Barrowman, R. (1999). *Victoria University of Wellington, 1899-1999: A History*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Block of Flats: State Housing Project in Dixon Street: Details Announced (1940, October 12). *Dominion*, p. 9, 12.

Davis, K. J. (1987) A Liberal Turn of Mind: The Architectural Work of F. Gordon Wilson, 1936-1959: A Cultural Analysis. Unpublished BArch research report, Victoria University of Wellington.

Davis, K. J. (2008). Pers. comm. to R. Skinner (March 9).

Dawson, E. V. (1991a). Letters: Plischke PR. *Architecture New Zealand,* (July-August), 5.

Dawson, E. V. (1991b). Letters: Plischke Recalled. *Architecture New Zealand,* (March-April), 9.

Dawson, E. V. (1996). Pers. comm. to J. Gatley (February 24), as cited in Gatley, 1997: 151-52.

Dawson, G. F. (1987). Letter to K. Davis (July 13), as cited in Davis, 1987: Appendix.

Dawson, G. F. (1994a). Pers. comm. to R. Skinner (October 4).

Dawson, G. F. (1994b). Pers. comm. to J. Gatley (December 10), as cited in Gatley 1997: 122.

Department of Housing Construction (1943). *General Report on State Housing in New Zealand*. Wellington: Government Printer.

Designed to Catch the Sun and Dodge the Winds (1943). *Home and Building*, *7*(1), 10-11.

Dixon Street Flats (1943). *Home and Building*, *7*(1), 20-21, 23, 47.

Family House and Garden (1951). *Design Review*, *3*(5), 112-15.

Gatley, J. (1995). Privacy and Propaganda: The Politics of the Dixon Street Flats. *Interstices*, (4), 11pp.

Gatley, J. (1996). For Modern Living: Government Blocks of Flats. In J. Wilson (Ed.), *Zeal and Crusade: The Modern Movement in Wellington* (pp. 53-68). Christchurch: Te Waihora Press.

Gatley, J. (1997). Labour Takes Command: A History and Analysis of State Rental Flats in New Zealand 1935-1949. Unpublished MArch thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.

Gatley, J. (2000). Wilson, Francis Gordon 1900-1959. In C. Orange (Ed.), *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume Five 1941-1960* (pp. 566-67). Auckland and Wellington: Auckland University Press and Department of Internal Affairs.

Heenan, J. W. (1948a). Letter to P. Watts Rule (March 24). Heenan Papers, MS Papers 1132-200, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Heenan, J. W. (1948b). Letter to P. Watts Rule (April 2). Heenan Papers.

Knofler, M. (2008a). Pers. comm. to R. Skinner (March 28).

Knofler, M. (2008b). Pers. comm. to R. Skinner (July 4).

Leach, A. (2003). *Frederick H. Newman: Lectures on Architecture*. Ghent, Belgium: A&S Books.

Matthews, A. (1986). E. A. Plischke – The Connection between Theory and Form. Unpublished BArch research report, University of Auckland.

New Zealand Institute of Architects (1947). *Year Book 1947: Including Proceedings of Annual Conference, 1947*. Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs.

New Zealand Institute of Architects (1948a). Minutes of the Thirty Second Annual Meeting, 3 March 1948. NZIA Papers. J. C. Beaglehole Room, Victoria University of Wellington.

New Zealand Institute of Architects (1948b). *Year Book 1948: Including Proceedings of Annual Conference, 1948*. Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs.

New Zealand Institute of Architects. Executive Minutes. NZIA Papers.

New Zealand Institute of Architects (1968). *Wellington Branch Annual Report 1968*. Wellington Branch Minute Book 1965-69. NZIA Papers.

New Zealand Institute of Architects Act (1913).

Newman, F. H. (1952). Social Factors in Architecture and their Implications for New Zealand. In Leach, 2003: 67-89.

Noonan, R. J. (1975). *By Design: A Brief History of the Public Works Department, Ministry of Works, 1870-1970*. Wellington: Government Printer.

One Hundred Homes in One (1944). *New Zealand Listener,* (January 14), 20-21.

Piechl, G. (Ed.). (1983). *E. A. Plischke*. Vienna: Akademie der bildenden Künste.

Plischke, E. A. (1969). *Vom Menschlichen im Neuen Bauen* (*On the Human Aspect in Modern Architecture*). Vienna: K. Wedl.

Plischke, E. A. (1989). *Ein Leben mit Architektur*. Vienna: Löcker.

Plishke [*sic*], E. A. (1947). *Design and Living*. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs.

Porter, D. G. (1963, April 6). Exile Brought Fresh Vision to N.Z. Architecture. *Dominion*, p. 10.

Reynolds, I. (1991). Letters: In context. *Architecture New Zealand,* (September-August), 5.

Rule, P. W. (1948). Letter to J. W. Heenan (March 14). Heenan Papers.

Saker, J. (1985). Rediscovering Ernst Plischke. *Wellington City Magazine,* (September), 58-61.

Sarnitz, A. & Ottillinger, E. (2004). *Ernst Plischke: Modern Architecture for the New World: The Complete Works*. Munich: Prestel. Originally published as *Ernst Plischke: Das Neue Bauen und die Neue Welt: Das Gesamtwerk*. Munich: Prestel, 2003.

Shaw, P. (1991a). Plischke in New Zealand. *Architecture New Zealand,* (January-February), 61-64.

Shaw, P. (1991b). Letters: Plischke Slights. *Architecture New Zealand,* (May-June), 9.

Shaw, P. (1991c). *New Zealand Architecture from Polynesian Beginnings to 1990*. Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton.

Shearer, J. O. (1947). Letter to the Registrar, AUC (January 23). Heenan Papers.

Two Apartment Houses in Wellington, N.Z. (1946). *Architectural Forum*, *85*(August), 69-72.

Tyler, L. (1986). The Architecture of E. A. Plischke in New Zealand, 1939-1962. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

Tyler, L. (2000). Plischke, Ernst Anton 1903-1992. In C. Orange (Ed.), *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume Five 1941-1960* (pp. 414-15). Auckland and Wellington: Auckland University Press and Department of Internal Affairs.

Tyler, L. (2004a). Built to Last. *Build,* (August-September), 32-34.

Tyler, L. (2004b). Ernst Plischke International Modernist. In *Ernst Plischke Architect*. Wellington: Wellington City Gallery.

Victoria University College Council, Minute Books 1946-1952, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

Wild, A. (1991). Letters: Twopence. *Architecture New Zealand,* (July-August), 5.

Wilson, F. G. (1947). Letter to the Registrar, AUC (January 31). Heenan Papers.

Non-refereed Papers, Images, Reviews & Interviews

Pattern Recognition

Ruth Watson, Erased graphite on paper, 2008 (p. 75)

Serendipity:
Between Making a Magazine and Writing History

Justine Clark

How does architectural history engage with serendipitous events, with a chance encounter that is put to use in the practice or making of something, but which leaves no overt archival record? Serendipity, incident and accident are involved, to some extent, in every act of making – whether the product is a magazine, a building or a historical account/interpretation. But can the processes and practices of architectural history respond to the incidental, to the unwritten and the unarchived? Or is this outside history's frame of reference? Does history only deal with its subject matter in terms of events that leave overt physical, 'authoritative' traces? (What of oral history?)

This paper considers these questions. It originated in an invitation to "critique the practice of architectural history from my perspective as editor of *Architecture Australia*" for a conference of architectural historians (for Beynon & de Jong, 2008). So, it is not the outcome of long hours of concentrated and considered research. Rather, it is the distillation of some ideas I have been mulling for a while, usually in a state of distraction, as I go about the everyday business of making a magazine. It is an attempt to bring these thoughts to bear on the topic of architectural history.

Architecture Australia is the journal of record of Australian architecture, and the latest in a direct line of publication that stretches back to 1904.[1] As such, it is a significant resource for the architectural historian. However, many decisions in the day-to-day making of the magazine are made 'on-the-fly', the result of particular circumstances, serendipitous and otherwise, that leave few if any archival traces. Nonetheless, the outcome of all these decisions is generally read as a 'definitive'. What might this mean for the magazine as a historical source? Acknowledging the role of serendipity does not necessarily undermine the 'authority' of the publication, but it does bring into question those historical accounts that are framed solely in terms of direct and apparently straightforward influence and intent.

I am not an architectural historian, but I have produced some architectural history, most notably *Looking for the Local: Architecture and the New Zealand Modern*, which was co-authored with Paul Walker and published in 2000. As part of the research for this, I spent quite some time trawling through old issues of architectural journals and magazines, so I have some awareness of the role of publications such as *Architecture Australia* in the writing of history. More than this, the knowledge gained through this earlier work has had a valuable influence on my current role as editor of *Architecture Australia*. It has provided a store of ideas – particularly about criticism, the media and the role of images in architectural culture – on which I continue to draw. But what are the potential influences in the other direction? Does the messy, quotidian activity of editing a magazine

1. For a short history of the magazine and its predecessors, see the sequence of articles published during its centenary: Goad (2004); Hogben (2004); Boddy (2004); The Editors (2004); and Hogben & Stead (2004).

that is also a 'journal of record' have the potential to affect the way one might practise history?

This paper reflects on the messiness of making and the processes of writing architectural history, on the seductiveness for the historian of pinning down and fixing intention and influence, on the impact of apparently slight, incidental events, on what is left off the historical record, and whether this matters.

My interest in the conjunction of the messiness of production and the construction of the historical record is partly a reaction to a number of historical accounts of the magazine that I have heard since I began working on it. These seem to offer quite fixed accounts – put rather crudely, they might go: "in 19 something-or-other so-and-so was president of the RAIA, his colleagues were published in the institute's magazine, therefore he must have exerted some influence on the content of the magazine". Now, this may have been the case, but it strikes me as a rather simplistic account of influence. In my experience, influence is rather less direct; power is exercised rather more subtly. Decisions about what to publish are the result of a more complicated and less overt set of circumstances, and the president and other RAIA officials have no direct input into what is published in any particular issue. This may have been different in the past, nonetheless I am sure that the magazine was still the outcome of complicated, incidental circumstances as well as highly considered policies and strategies.

Let me give an example. In May this year, *Architecture Australia* published a review of Ashton Raggatt McDougall's Albury Cultural Centre (Peacock, 2008). Ian McDougall, director of ARM and member of the project team, is also the chair of the RAIA Advisory Board to *Architecture Australia*, and was, until recently, a member of the RAIA National Council. For a future historian looking to join the dots, the exercise of influence might seem obvious. However, the means by which the project came to be reviewed are in fact quite different. McDougall had indeed mentioned the project to me some years earlier when ARM won the commission, but I was made aware of its completion, and of its quality, in a quite different way. Over the course of two months in late 2007, I received three phone calls from quite different people, all of whose judgment I respect, each saying something like, "I am in Albury and I have just seen a very interesting building – you should publish it". Three unsolicited phone calls about a project is three more than I usually get, and it was in a regional town, a location that is under-represented in the pages of the magazine. Publishing it seemed like a good idea. The reasons for doing so have left no archival trace. Does that matter? Probably not.

I am not suggesting that future historians should or will care about how that building came to be published. But I am suggesting that the writers of history need to beware of the temptations of joining the dots and to be mindful of the seduction of apparently easy chains of influence and stories of intent.

Putting together any issue of a magazine involves a lot of planning, consideration and hard work – and an element of chance. No matter the intent of the editorial team, there is always a degree of serendipity at play, and the results are often the better for it. As with making anything, it is partly a matter of seeing how to take advantage of unintentional but fortuitous events, of recognizing possibilities and finding a way to make something of them.

No issue is made in an ideal environment. There is never a moment of quiet when all possible content is laid out before me, allowing a singular moment of informed decision about the content of a particular issue. Rather any issue is commissioned over time, with some decisions influenced by earlier ones, and things being revised and reconsidered as we go. An issue of a magazine is not a book. It is an iterative, cumulative thing, which makes sense over a sequence of issues, as well as within any particular issue.

Any issue of the magazine is always also slightly beyond my control. I collect a series of projects that I think will make sense together; I commission intelligent and thoughtful reviewers who will have something productive to say. Then a reviewer writes about projects in an unexpected way, and suddenly new connections are made within the content of an issue. The final photographs and drawings come in, and things change again: some images are particularly striking; others are small files and cannot be used that big on the page. The designer sees an opportunity we hadn't thought of. Another ad booking comes in and I have to reduce something by a page. The balance shifts again. The result is usually a network of projects and ideas rather than a tightly structured exegesis on a particular theme or type.

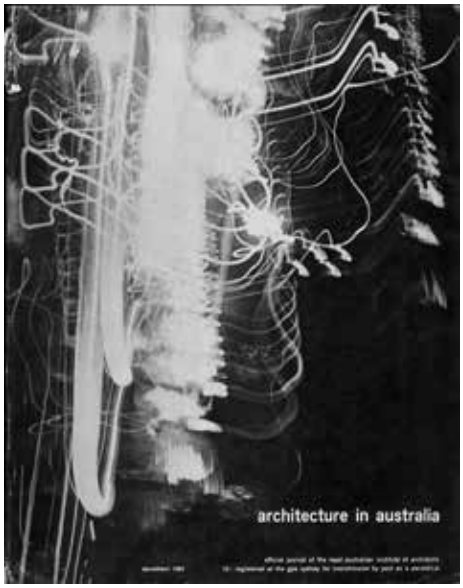
In the pages of the magazine quite different buildings rub against each other and maybe generate some sparks in the mind of the reader, who brings further interests and interpretations to bear on the content. Recognizing that the magazine as an object always exceeds the intent of the editorial team is important. It does not mean that one throws one's hands in the air and relinquishes responsibility, but it does remind us that larger things are always at play than the intent of any particular individual or group of individuals. The magazine is a product of the culture in which it is made, and editors, authors and architects are all cultural agents.

In making the magazine, I am also quite conscious of its role as journal of record and as future resource. I am quite aware that publishing a project is one important way of making it available for discussion in the architectural community, and that this is one first step in the consensual, communal creation of the canon.[2] However, this consciousness of the role of the magazine in history also manifests itself in many small and pragmatic ways – for example, we put a great deal of work into reproducing drawings. We are very careful about the ordering, they are all reproduced at 'proper scales', line-weights are carefully adjusted to ensure they print as well as possible. This is invisible work, but it also distinguishes our publication from others in Australia.

So, might we construct historical accounts that acknowledge or engage with serendipity and the contingent, with objects that cannot be understood only in terms of intent? Would this be useful? I believe these questions are relevant partly because they are at stake to some extent in all the objects that become the subjects and the sources of architectural history, not just in magazines.

The process of producing a magazine has parallels in the way other objects are made – most obviously buildings – and in the production of history itself. In making and telling coherent stories, history often tends to smooth over the messiness of the everyday. In some ways this is a necessary effect, but wrinkles can also be revealing. It might be useful for historians to remember the contingent nature of their own productions. How do their research projects come about? Which ones

2. Juan Pablo Bonta's account of canon formation in architecture is still very compelling. See Bonta (1979).



All images courtesy of Architecture Australia / Architecture Media, Melbourne.

are realized, and for what reasons? Which ones languish? Which ones make it through the obscure workings of the Australian Research Council (and why!)? How does a research project proceed? What of serendipity? How might reflecting on this affect the way in which one practises history?

The Seduction of the Archive

The archive is very seductive – there are the facts, just waiting to be dug up and strung together into stories. Written down, in black lines on white paper, these facts appear incontrovertible, apparently objective. Memory, by contrast, is unreliable; accounts are skewed to suit the agenda and interests of the teller. But of course the archive also provides a skewed account, simply by virtue of what is included and what is left out. We know this from many decades of work on gender, class and race, on those who were frequently omitted from the historic record and how their stories might be retrieved. This work is very important, but what also interests me are the more incidental events by which one debate or thought is recorded, and thereby made available to the future historian, and one is not. And with all the facts embedded in the archive, waiting to be 'found' and interpreted, what of those events that leave only tiny traces?

One response to this dilemma is to simply try to record more and more, to keep filling in the gaps, to accumulate ever more detailed facts, to tell fuller and fuller stories, to record more and more oral history.

One of my favourite pieces of history writing that fills a gap using personal knowledge is an essay published by Reyner Banham in 1968. "The Revenge of the Picturesque" outlines a debate around modernism in postwar London, which was influential, but left only slight traces in the printed record – in gossip columns, letters to the editor and so on. Banham uses his knowledge and recollections to draw these slight traces together. He begins, in his inimitable way:

> Those of my generation who interrupted their architectural training in order to fight a war to make the world safe for the Modern Movement, tended to resume their studies after demobilization with sentiments of betrayal and abandonment. Two of the leading oracles of Modern Architecture appeared to have thrown principle to the wind and espoused the most debased English habits of compromise and sentimentality. (Banham, 1968: 265)

(He is talking of J. M. Richards and Nikolaus Pevsner). He continues,

> So, combat was joined between a barely middle-aged architectural 'Establishment' armed with a major magazine, and a generation of battle-hardened and unusually mature students.… But the student generation were without much means of public expression … and little of the polemic is visible in print. (Banham, 1968: 265-66)

Banham goes on to give a detailed, amusing account of the polemic through the slight traces they left in print, concluding by pointing out that it all ended with the total "triumph of the unacknowledged Picturesqueness of the Picturesque's avowed enemies" (Banham, 1968: 273). Like most of Banham's writing, this is a compelling and engaging essay. And it clearly makes the point that conversations and debates that have significant effects on the development of architectural cultures do not always leave much of a record, even when carried out by influential figures.

But filling in the gaps can also be a very dull exercise, leading to some very dull history. The model of the ever-expanding canon is not always the most interesting or useful way to produce history. And the gaps can never all be filled.

The Incidental and New Zealand Architectural History

But the gaps themselves might be interesting. This is an important point in this part of the world where so much architectural history goes unrecorded, and where canons seem to be built on quite ephemeral ground.

Indeed, I would suggest that architectural historians working in Australia and New Zealand might in fact be quite well equipped to deal with the questions I have raised, precisely because of the elusive nature of the archive and the printed record, and the need to be clever with the material one draws on to practise history here. We have rather less at our disposal, for example, than Banham did.

I would like to speculate further on this, particularly in relation to New Zealand historical practices. These speculations are not based in considered analysis – I have not had time to systematically survey the proceedings of previous SAHANZ conferences, or the back issues of *Fabrications*. Rather they come out of a hunch I have had for some time, that a certain sensibility has developed in one strand of New Zealand architectural history writing. As I reflected on the ideas above through the lens of *Architecture Australia*, it occurred to me that this sensibility offers quite some opportunity for thinking inventively about the practice

of history in relation to the serendipitous. So, my experiences here in Australia have sent me back to thinking about New Zealand. (But surely this is one of the benefits of SAHANZ).

This particular sensibility, which I think pervades one strand of New Zealand architectural history, is an interest in the minor, or the 'slight', and what it might offer. This is not an interest in simply adding more and more facts to the historical record, in constantly expanding the canon. Rather, it is an approach to history predicated on what might be called the 'glance'. On looking awry, on using apparently minor details to offer new vantage points, from which to construct new interpretations and tell other stories, to illuminate issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. To my knowledge, this has not been clearly articulated as a particular methodology, rather it has simply built up over the years. But it seems to offer some opportunities for dealing with 'stuff' on the edges of the historic record – a way of picking up the most minor trace, and running with it. And once you start looking from an odd angle, it is amazing what you find.

This approach is not restricted to New Zealand material. I recall a paper presented by Sean Flanagan at SAHANZ in 2002. This concerned the house for Dr Christ, described as "an uninvited guest at one of Modernism's most prestigious gatherings" (Flanagan, 2002: 58); that is, the Weissenhofsiedlung. The house left only tiny traces in the historical record: it only appeared in the corner of photos of other buildings. But Flanagan used this absence to spin out an interesting discussion, one that he may not have developed had he been looking in a more straightforward way.

This sensibility also influenced *Looking for the Local*, which used the story of an earlier book that never happened to unravel certain mythologies in New Zealand architecture. Indeed, writing a book about a book that didn't go ahead seems like a particularly New Zealand thing to do! I hope you will indulge me if I use this as an example.

Part of writing that book involved collecting stray elements floating on the surface of all kinds of architectural commentaries. These small traces indexed debates and discussions that had been influential but left no strong or clear historical record.

One telling example was the string of slight references around the idea of the 'straightforward'. Like the polemic outlined by Banham, this was an important idea, but it only left small traces. Coincidentally it also involved Nikolaus Pevsner in debate with younger architects, but without other famous players.

Pevsner was one of the few international critics to visit New Zealand and comment on its architecture postwar.[3] He did so in two radio talks; in "Commonwealth 1", a special issue of the *Architectural Review* on the architecture of the Dominions; and in a talk to the Royal Commonwealth Society (Pevsner, 1958a; Pevsner, 1958b; New Zealand, 1959: 206). In each of these he refers obliquely to a conversation with architect Bill Toomath about timber detailing. He tells the story differently on each occasion, recasting it for various audiences. Sometimes Pevsner allows that there may be some potential in such crude detailing – "Maybe he was right, maybe that robustness of detail which strikes me as a little raw will one day be a valid expression of the New Zealand version of 20th Century architecture" (Pevsner, 1958b: 4) – but in the anonymous piece for the prestigious canon-making *Architectural Review*, he leaves no room for such possibility:

3. For a full account of Pevsner's New Zealand tour, see Skinner (1996).

> … lack of means is often apparent in the detailing, although a certain crudity is called straightforwardness and, at least by some of the most thoughtful young architects, set up as a new country feature in opposition to the old-men's fussiness at home. It sounds convincing at first, but California is not all that old, but it still manages to get its details right. (New Zealand, 1959: 206)

This generated a series of responses in New Zealand. In 1960 the *New Zealand Listener* reviewed the *Review*, disseminating the story to a wide local audience and claiming straightforwardness as a national trait (Seen from a Distance, 1960: 7).[4] The director of Auckland Art Gallery, Peter Tomory, did likewise, writing, "A colonial heritage begets directness, bluntness in fact, a kind of colonial Brutalism which provides a strong tonic to the too-sugared spirit of European sophistication" (Tomory, 1961: 76). Not every local commentator agreed. In a piece called "The Wild Colonial Boys", *Comment* deplored the cultural nihilism of the *Listener* (Wild Colonial Boys, 1960: 10).

Tangential references to this conversation continued to appear as arguments for the straightforward were made and remade.[5] It reverberates as late as 1993 when Leonard Bell, writing about the role of the primitive in New Zealand art, quotes Tomory and excises all connection to architecture (Bell, 1993: 111). When each reference is read in isolation they are hardly noticed. However, when collected together they can be recognized as the strange echo of an incidental conversation about a post propping up a carport in Lower Hutt. The bizarre yet powerful effect of apparently incidental material becomes apparent.

It might be said that this scraping together of slight references and tangential asides is another kind of join-the-dots. However, I would argue the difference is partly in the use to which these references are put, and the way they are understood. They are not treated as a string of facts to determine influence, or intent, nor as the building blocks of the canon. Rather they are understood as indices of architectural debates and discussion which might be worth interpretation. Stray sentences, half-developed ideas in building reviews, historical overviews and statements of intent might be read as the shadows, scratches and traces left by numerous events and discussions which leave no clear concrete archival account, but were nonetheless influential. What new critical and historical possibilities might open up if we develop these other ways of understanding archival traces – for example, in terms of indexicality? Might this lead to other kinds of productive architectural encounters?

This might seem like a long way from where I started – from serendipity and the everyday activity of editing *Architecture Australia*. However, I think that the idea of reading archival traces as indices has a lot of potential for negotiating the complex array of issues with which I began. It allows you to work in the space between intention and incident, between serendipity and authority, between economics and ideal, between the messiness and the formality of a publication like *Architecture Australia*. This is the space that I work in daily, and in which I am also interested in terms of the practice of history. The index allows you to negotiate these spaces because although it is a sign that is read as a mark caused by an action, it is also, if we follow Umberto Eco, a culturally produced effect. What is it to think of the stuff from which we make history in these terms?

4. N. and J. Sheppard make a similar argument (1961: 471).

5. For a longer discussion of this, see Clark & Walker (2000: 35-37).

References

Banham, R. (1968). The Revenge of the Picturesque: English Architectural Polemics 1945-1965. In J. Summerson (Ed.), *Concerning Architecture* (pp. 265-73). London: Allen & Lane.

Bell, Leonard. (1993). *Landfall*, the Primitive, and the Visual Arts in the 1950s. *Landfall*, *1* (1 [new series]), 106-13.

Beynon, D., & de Jong, U. (Eds.) (2008). *History in Practice: 25th International Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*. Geelong, Vic: SAHANZ.

Boddy, A. (2004). Photography and Architecture. *Architecture Australia*, *93*(4), 20-21.

Bonta, J. P. (1979). *Architecture and its Interpretation: A Study of Expressive Systems in Architecture*. London: Lund Humphries.

Clark, J. & Walker, P. (2000). *Looking for the Local: Architecture and the New Zealand Modern*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

The Editors. (2004). *Architecture Australia*, *93*(5), 23-27.

Flanagan, S. (2002). The Weissenhofsiedlung and the House for Dr Christ. In J. Macarthur & A. Moulis (Eds.), *Additions to Architectural History: 19th Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*. Brisbane: SAHANZ.

Goad, P. (2004). One Hundred Years of Discourse. *Architecture Australia*, *93*(1), 18-26.

Hogben, P. (2004). One Hundred Years of Advertising. *Architecture Australia*, *93*(2), 20-23.

Hogben, P. & Stead, N. (2004). Rhetoric and Tone. *Architecture Australia*, *93*(6), 26-30.

New Zealand (1959). *Architectural Review*, *126*(752), 206.

Peacock, D. (2008). Albury Cultural Centre. *Architecture Australia*, *97*(3), 58-65.

Pevsner, N. (1958a). The Ingratiating Chaos: Impressions of New Zealand. *Listener* (UK) *60*(November 20), 825-27. Extracts published in *Journal of the NZIA*, *26*(2), 42-43.

Pevsner, N. (1958b). New Architecture and New Art. *New Zealand Listener*, *40*(1010), 4. Republished in *Journal of the NZIA*, *25*(10), 261-85.

Seen from a Distance: London Journal Looks at NZ Architecture. (1960). *New Zealand Listener*, *42*(1067), 6-7.

Sheppard, N. & J. (1961). Domestic Architecture in New Zealand. *Architectural Design*, *31*(October), 471-74.

Skinner, R. (1996). Nikki Down Under: Impressions of Pevsner in New Zealand. In P. Goad & J. Willis (Eds.), *Loyalty and Disloyalty in the Architecture of the British Empire and Commonwealth: Selected Papers from the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand, 1996* (pp. 102-10). Melbourne: SAHANZ / University of Melbourne.

Tomory, P. (1961). The Visual Arts. In K. Sinclair (Ed.), *Distance Looks our Way: The Effect of Remoteness on New Zealand* (pp. 63-78). Auckland: Paul's Book Arcade for the University of Auckland.

The Wild Colonial Boys (1960). *Comment*, (Spring), 10.

Places, Spaces, Baggage

John Walsh

Let's come clean: when we go to look at places and spaces (architecture, that is), we drag along a lot of baggage and, especially if we're there to write about these places and spaces, quite a few undeclared items. Our prejudices and preconceptions, for instance – our values and agendas, our ethics and our politics. This discretionary approach to disclosure, most apparent in the treatment of domestic architecture, is at odds with the modus operandi of other writers who deal with places and spaces. Travel writing, for example, is now a confessional genre. At this stage of the game, everyone expects that a traveller's tale will be about not what the traveller finds, but what he brings. That is, the accoutrements of a personality or, more likely, the trappings of a persona. Travel, for writers, used to be what the Foreign Legion was for fugitives: a means of escape from an old self. Contemporary travel writing, though, is based on the profitable acceptance of the realization that, in a world that's thoroughly known, there's no point in trying to escape the inescapable. That guy in the mirror: Why try to get away from him? The self and its psychic freight – that's the story.

In architectural writing – 'popular' architectural writing, that is, although the audience is hardly substantial – we proceed as though the place is still the thing. The journey is beside the point, and our 'baggage' is meant to be checked at the door. Of course, this is an unrealistic, if not impossible requirement. Much like the endangered principle of journalistic objectivity, though, it does offer a disciplinary counter to self-indulgence, and does engender some productive tension. For what one has to resist, or at least monitor, when encountering and then writing about residential architecture, is the rush to normative judgement. This is not a concern for the 'lifestyle' school of house literature, a critical kindy in which cheer-leading is the only subject on the curriculum, but it is an issue for anyone who approaches the subject with some seriousness. A commentary on a building can easily morph, via a critique of the inhabitants' aesthetic sensibility and the presumed size of their bank balance, into a moral tract.

Bespoke residential architecture provokes complicated reactions, as do the publications dedicated to it. Admiration is one response, although respect is rarely accorded without reservation, sensibly enough. Unsurprisingly, in a small society with folk memories of egalitarianism and homogeneity, envy is a more common and more visceral response. The spectrum of resentment ranges from mild social democratic disdain, through pursed-lipped, petit-bourgeois puritanism, to full-blown rage over the manifest inequality exemplified by a large, architect-designed house. Lately, such buildings have faced criticism on another front: not only are they offensive to a putative natural order, but they affront Nature herself. 'Big A' residential architecture, especially if realized on a big scale, is unsustainable, its critics rejoice. If God or Man won't stop it, Gaia will.

The moralistic denunciation of new domestic architecture extends to representations of it. Architectural photographers, and their publishers, are, apparently, engaged in pornography. 'Soft-core' porn, that is. (Which does beg some questions: Is there 'hard-core' architectural porn? Do the monumental erections flaunted by the Gulf sultanates earn the appellation?) Architects themselves are particularly partial to this analogy, a trope that suggests a certain degree of professional self-loathing – unresolved baggage, perhaps. The problem seems to be that houses in magazines or books look too good. The sun is out, the sky is blue; frequently – normally – the houses are photographed without their occupants. There's stuff, but there's no mess. There's style, but there's no life.

Really, you'd have to be a bit of a wanker to find this pornographic. What seems to be occurring is the wilfully naïve mistaking of the conventions of a genre for a pernicious world-view. As architects well know, there are good reasons why people and their baggage are absent from architectural photographs. In part, it's because architects want viewers to see the architecture; in part it's because inhabitants don't want viewers to see them; and in part, it's because publishers have to sell books. Unmade beds, unwashed dishes, unlaundered undies – that might be how we live, but it's not, unless our tastes do indeed run to the scatological end of soft-core porn, what we'll pay to read about. Sadly, the magazine and book-buying public is also resistant to washed-out photographs taken on the drear days typical of our pluvial isles. No doubt it would be morally improving for readers to confront houses in their more dishevelled states and at their less photogenic moments, but as for paying for the privilege – why should they? It's only natural that readers of architectural books and magazines prefer to view the subjects of those publications as we all tend to remember the days of our pasts, that is, as lit by the sun.

If writers and photographers, and their publishers, seem to conspire to pretend that the occupants of architect-designed houses live without traces, how do architects themselves approach their clients' baggage? This is a more serious concern: while publishers trade in appearances (how could they do otherwise?), architects design for real, and particular, lives. Quotidian duty takes me to quite a few new houses, and rather melancholy these visits can be. I've ruminated upon this tristesse; I don't think it's occasioned by jealousy (however impressive a house may be, I understand it hasn't been made for me), or incompetence (the standards of design and execution are often very high), or the shortcomings of the site or my reception (usually stunning and invariably courteous, respectively). I think the sadness – and I may be too sensitive on this point – derives from a certain incongruity between the clients and their houses. A sense of bemusement is often palpable: the clients' houses might be brand new, but they're not. They definitely have excess baggage.

At their age – and architectural patronage is a mature pursuit – clients are built for comfort. Their houses, however, especially if designed in the neo-modernist style, are more uncompromising. The tell-tale sign of true middle-age, upper middle-class inclinations is the huge plasma TV: its inclusion is the one demand clients are sure to make, and it's the one concession that otherwise strict architects know they had better offer. Seeing these big screens, the question does occur: Are the clients seeking to escape from themselves, or from the hard, angular spaces that their bright, young architects have designed for them? A depressing choice, maybe, but let's not be too snooty; as we pass through people's houses we should resist the temptation to put them in their place.

Czechoslovakian Crystal
in Pavlova Paradise: Vladimir Čačala, 1926-2007

Linda Tyler

Characterizing New Zealand as the half-gallon, quarter-acre, pavlova paradise in 1972, British writer Austin Mitchell distilled the essence of national aspiration (Mitchell, 1972). During the Holyoake years, a detached house on a separate parcel of land had somehow become identified with what it meant to be a true New Zealander. Low-interest State Advances loans after the Second World War meant that this ideal suburban existence was an achievable goal even for those on low incomes. But as a writer in *Design Review* cautioned in 1953, over 40 percent of the population of cities were people "for whom a detached house standing in its own grounds is not necessarily the most practical proposition. Its maintenance is too costly in terms of time, money or ability" (Your New House, 1953: 88). The writer advocated building flats as an alternative:

> Multi-unit housing development in the cities is as important to the economy of the country as a single-unit development in the suburban areas; such development has sometimes been carried out successfully in the past but it carries the stigma of the overcrowded slum with it. The need for well-designed flats is more pressing than ever before and the people who need them most are least in a position to finance their erection. This must be a task for local or national government, or for the larger private investment agencies. (Your New House, 1953: 88)

High-density housing was considered foreign, associated with Europe and hard to assimilate, although the Labour Government had undertaken experiments with large-scale rental developments in cities in the 1940s. Austrian architect Ernst Plischke later reported that the New Zealand suspicion about apartment blocks was that only prostitutes or intellectuals wanted to live in them.[1] Housing these particular groups within the larger society was not a priority for post-war planners.

With the change of government to National in 1949, opportunities arose for private investors to develop urban blocks to accommodate flats that would be affordable for low-to-middle income groups. In Auckland, émigré Czechoslovakian architect Vladimir Čačala (1926-2007) (Fig. 1),[2] who arrived in the city at the end of 1952, spearheaded this development. Well-recognized for his glamorous avant-garde designs for homes such as the Blumenthal House (1958), Čačala is less well-known for his pioneering of the new materials and methods of modernism to produce a higher density of housing for private clients. In this article, Čačala's biography is sketched and his most significant designs for houses, factories, shops and churches are assayed against the proposition that the extent of his involvement in multi-unit design had implications for his modernism.

Appropriately enough – since apartment blocks were considered fit only for bohemians in New Zealand – Čačala was an immigrant from the country previously known as Bohemia. Vladimir Oldrich Čačala was born in Prague in 1926, only

The author would like to acknowledge the considerable help she had in preparing this article from Vladimir Čačala's four daughters: Shas Čačala, Liza Clark, Tanya Healey and Vicki Wallace.

1. In his self-published memoir, Plischke recalls the words of a visiting housing official: "In Auckland leben nur Prostituierte und Intellektuelle in *flats*" (Plischke, 1989: 283). This is corroborated by Cedric Firth who wrote in 1949: "To the ordinary citizen, the term 'flat' is indelibly associated with a tall barracks-like structure with poor accommodation and poor appearance and with little to commend it.... A title, then, is required to cover flats planned to meet the modern requirements of the family – a title devoid of so many unattractive associations. It is hoped that the term 'multi-unit' will suffice" (Firth, 1949: 37).

2. Born 23 March 1926, married 9 May 1957, died 27 May 2007.

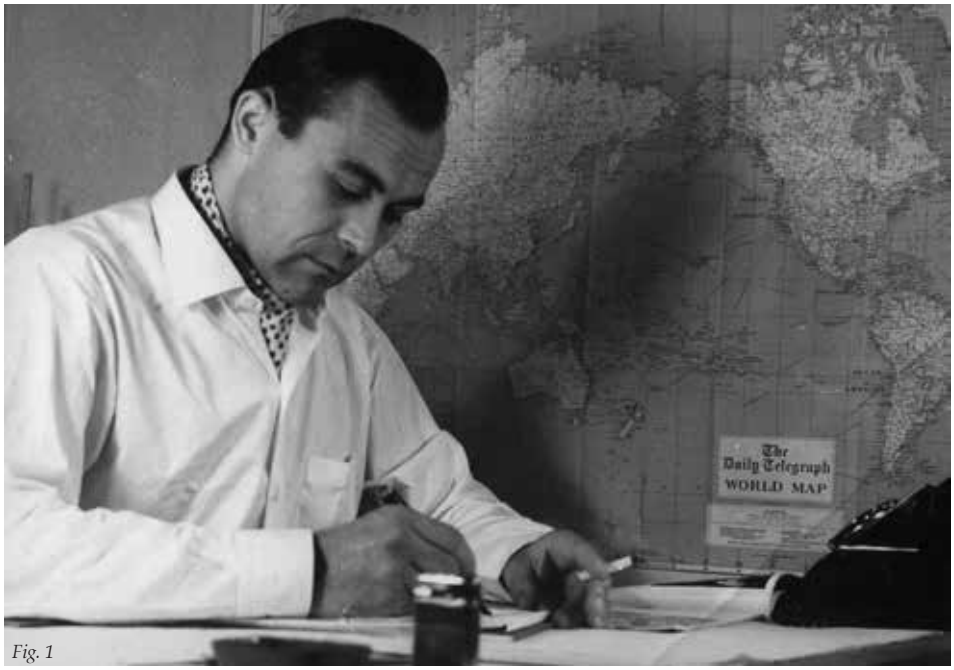


Fig. 1

Fig. 1: Vladimir Oldrich Čačala. Čačala Family Collection.

3. The furniture of Bohemian cabinet-maker and marquetarian Anton Seuffert (1815-87), who arrived in Auckland in 1859, exemplifies this fine woodworking tradition.

eight years after the Austro-Hungarian Empire had ended with the defeat of Germany in 1918. The new union of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia created one of Europe's most industrialized countries, and by the 1930s, Czechoslovakia was at the forefront of new thinking about architecture, design and the application of modern technologies. Wooden furniture, and in particular marquetry, had a long tradition in the region, but was beginning to be superseded by a demand for chrome-plated steel and lacquer promoted by the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes held in Paris in 1925.[3]

As well as changing the face of Czechoslovakian furniture, prosperity facilitated controversial architecture. In Prague, building was controlled by a central planning authority which favoured proposals for projects that could express the prestige of the city through dramatic design. As the middle child born to furniture manufacturer Vladimir T. Čačala, the young V. O. Čačala had a privileged insight into contemporary design in the capital city. He visited many of the newly built and most remarkable examples of architecture with his father, including Adolf Loos' Villa Mueller (1930) and the Dutch architect Mart Stam's Palicka House (1932), which was part of the Baba Housing Estate (1928-40), the Czech equivalent of the Weissenhofsiedlung. A three-hour bus ride away was Mies van der Rohe's Tugendhat House (1930) in Brno. Built with a steel and concrete skeleton frame, with screens of translucent onyx and marquetry in exotic woods on the interior, the most impressive feature of the Tugendhat House for the young boy was that the glazing at the front had been designed to retract into the floor to turn the whole living space into an elevated porch.

These informal lessons in modernism were interrupted, along with Čačala's formal education, in the late 1930s when the universities in his country closed and remained closed for six years during the Second World War. Invaded, annexed and generally appropriated by Nazi Germany, Czechoslovakia was not liberated by the Red Army until 1944. Čačala enrolled at the Czech Technical University in Prague when teaching resumed on 4 June 1945, under Professor Emil Králik (1880-1946). Karel Prager (1923-2001) and Karel Hubáček (born 1924), who would

later be acclaimed for their use of new materials and structural elements, were also students at the time. Interviewed in 2004, Čačala described his architectural training in post-war Prague as being heavily influenced by the Bauhaus:

> When the Bauhaus was closed by Hitler in 1933, all the students and the professors spread away from Germany. A lot went to Prague and that's where I was lucky. I had those teachers to learn the clean lines and the simplicity from. The architecture school in Prague was more or less run by the guys who were Bauhaus. (Binsley, 2004: 72)

For many Europeans of Čačala's generation, the Bauhaus[4] introduced the concept of the design studio as a kind of industrial laboratory, where ideas for mass production could be trialled. Marcel Breuer's cantilevered armchairs, which were made of tubular steel and leather and were light, transparent and easily moved, with the base of the frame acting as a skid, epitomized the Bauhaus aesthetic.

Neither Fascism nor Marxism proved conducive to modernist architectural design. Czechoslovakia became a satellite state of the Soviet Union in February 1948. The economy was committed to centralized planning, and private architectural practice was banned. Čačala's father was denounced as an enemy of the people, his factory was closed and he disappeared. Seven months later, in September 1949, his son escaped across the border to American-occupied Bavaria. From there he travelled to Hamburg and in 1950, with the assistance of the United Nations International Refugee Organization, he gained passage to Melbourne from Naples on board the Sitmar liner *Fairsea*.[5] He travelled under the Displaced Persons Programme which brought 170,000 immigrants to Australia between 1947 and 1953. In Sydney, Čačala worked as an architectural draughtsman before discovering that his father, who had left Czechoslovakia six months before, had already settled in New Zealand. On Christmas Day 1952, they were reunited in Auckland, a city around a third the size of Prague with a population of about 300,000 people.

As an industrial designer with skills in plywood furniture manufacture from his years working in his father's factory, Čačala had no difficulty finding employment. He joined the architectural partnership of Brenner Associates[6] which had been formed in 1949. Des Mullen, Stephen Jelicich and Milan Mrkusich (the latter two of Dalmatian-Croatian descent) had been joined by Ron Grant in 1950, and worked mostly on interior fit-outs, with their showroom at 79 Hobson Street. Čačala found Brenners the ideal vehicle for his ideas about modern architecture and he became a design partner in 1954. He soon found his first independent clients as well. Austrians Ernst Gelb and his wife Ilse, a seamstress, had arrived in New Zealand as refugees from Hitler in 1939 and prospered. They bought a north-facing section in Mt Albert Road, opposite historic Alberton, and sought to build a sophisticated house which reflected their European origins. Perched atop a solid masonry basement, the wooden house is clad with vertical cedar boards and has a flat roof. A timber deck cantilevers out over the garden along the length of the house at the back, opening up the living room and master bedroom to the distant views and sunlight through French doors (Reid, 1992: 75-83).

Two years later, in 1958, Čačala was commissioned by fellow Czechoslovakian émigré Ernest Blumenthal and his Canadian speech therapist wife Rachel Raye Blumenthal (née Ginsberg) to design a contemporary house for modern living (Figs. 2, 3 and 4).[7] On a private St Heliers section with panoramic views, Čačala

4. At the Bauhaus in Dessau in 1927, an architectural department had been set up by Hannes Meyer (1889-1954), a champion of functionalism in architecture, but his Marxism led to his being replaced as director in 1930 by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1967).

5. The passport issued to Vladimir Oldrich Čačala is dated 2 January 1950.

6. Named for the mountain pass through the Alps between Italy and Austria, where Mussolini and Hitler met to celebrate symbolically their Pact of Steel in 1940.

7. Another Czech architect, Heinrich Kulka (1900-71), had been the best man at the Blumenthals' wedding, yet it was Čačala, who was chosen to design the house.

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

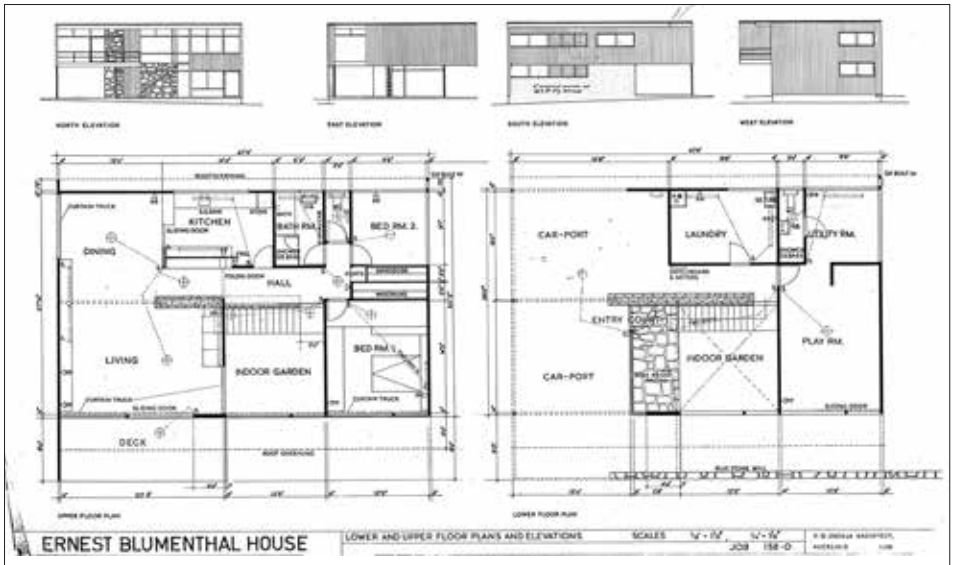


Fig. 4

Fig. 2: Blumenthal House, 1958. Čačala Family Collection.

Fig. 3: Blumenthal House at night. Photograph by Ted Mahieu. Čačala Family Collection.

Fig. 4: Plans of the Blumenthal House, 1958. Čačala Family Collection.

created the masterpiece that has earned him his place in the annals of practitioners of the International Style in New Zealand. Making spectacular use of cantilevering and large areas of glass, the Blumenthal House creates the illusion of light construction and airy spaciousness. Cars are parked under the overhanging living area, and the front door opens into an indoor garden, lush with banana plants and tropical palms. This entry is a two-storeyed space which provides light into the hall and the west wall of the living room. At the back, a wall of dark stone anchors the house centrally, with timber stair treads supported on steel members cantilevering out from it. As with some of his later blocks of flats, here the staircase in its garden has a space-forming role, creating a heart for the whole building from which the other areas are derived.

Čačala's use of bluestone cladding on the staircase wall in the Blumenthal House, to create a centre of power for the house, derives from European prototypes. Like the marble walls of Mies van der Rohe or the Utah rock used by Richard Neutra for the interior of his desert homes, Čačala's volcanic stone is both functional and decorative. Sourced locally in a typically modernist fashion, this indigenous material relates the house to its Auckland geological context. Rather than it becoming a heavy, dark presence in the house, its surface is enlivened with white pointing in the living room area. Finishes throughout the house combine natural and cultural references. Built-in furniture in the bedrooms and wall panelling have a mahogany veneer, while the cabinets in the living area were painted red, grey, white and black and suspended miraculously clear of the floor, being dubbed a "suspended utility entertainment wall". Like the dark-stained timber houses of Vernon Brown and the Group from this period,


Fig. 5


Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Interior of Vladimir and Yvette Kozak's store, Form. Čačala Family Collection.

Fig. 6: Church of St Peter on the Hill, Manurewa, 1967. Čačala Family Collection.

Čačala finished the external vertical cedar cladding on three sides of the house with a mixture of creosote and Stockholm tar, but painted the front with bands of primary colours. As a result, the north elevation was thought by the international architectural press to resemble a composition by the Dutch De Stijl painter, Piet Mondrian. Named the Mondrian House, it featured in the prestigious Los Angeles periodical, *Arts and Architecture*, which had Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius and Richard Neutra as editorial advisors (House in New Zealand, 1960: 26); as well as in Gio Ponti's *Domus*, published in Milan (Il Verde "Fuori Scala", 1962: 47); and the local magazine, *The Mirror* (Interior-Exterior Harmony, 1961: 50-51, 58).[8]

Čačala's reputation was assured with this commission, and he set up his own architectural practice in partnership with Walter Leu in 1959. As Čačala, Leu Associates, they created high modern design for fashionable clients: an interior for Vladimir and Yvette Kozak's store, Form, in High Street (Fig. 5); and a fit-out for the Blumenthals' coffee shop on Queen Street, the Kottage Kake Kitchen. The partnership was also responsible for the design of a factory for men's tie manufacturer John Webster in Exmouth Street (John Webster & Co., 1963: 12). In Otara, South Auckland, they completed a brick factory for cabinetmakers G. C. Goode and Co. which maximized natural light along the assembly line (G. C. Goode & Co., 1967: 58-59), as well as the radical A-framed Church of St Peter on the Hill (Fig. 6) and the Church of St Albans with exposed steel structure, both in Manurewa and both designed in 1965 (Bond, 1965). Featuring in the Parade of Homes in Manurewa in 1964 was the remarkable exhibition house Contempora, with two-storey lounge and windowless brick west wall, which, like the Blumenthal House, had an indoor garden that extended under the stairs (Exhibition House, 1966: 34-37). The Kay House (1959) in Victoria Avenue, Remuera (Uncluttered Look, 1965: 11), Čačala's own house in Lucerne Road (1959) (Sensitive Unity, 1963: 20) and houses designed for his friend Bernd Koningham (Konigsheimer), first at Shore Road, then Lucerne Road, showed his ability to create elegant and classic domestic designs for a New Zealand lifestyle (Fig. 7).

8. *The Ladies' Mirror* (1922-26) was superseded by *The Mirror: New Zealand's National Home Journal* which was published by Henry Kelliher of Dominion Breweries as a vehicle for his views on monetary reform. The last issue was March 1963.

Fig. 7: Koningham House, 1960. Čačala Family Collection.

The distinguished designs for individual houses from the 1950s have somewhat eclipsed Čačala's reputation for multi-units later in his career. He had a long-term interest in rental housing, and even his most glamorous homes often included self-contained flats which could be rented out to provide owners with income. Providing his fellow investors with good returns,[9] Čačala's approach was bold and innovative. In his multi-units, it is possible to see an antipodean parallel to Mies van der Rohe's low-rise townhouses and Pavilion Apartment designs in Illinois, where the introduction of externally projecting mullions at the module reference points makes the elements of the building's structure visible. As early as 1954, Čačala built his first block of four two-bedroomed apartments at 100 St Stephen's Avenue in Parnell. Using first brick, then concrete and finally reinforced concrete block in combination with large areas of glass, Čačala moved towards a Miesian fusion of structure with transparency over the next twenty years.

Unlike Mies, his uppermost concern was always affordability. With his first multi-units, he took care to comply with the conditions for a State Advances loan by keeping the cost of each to £1000 so that they could be individually purchased. His next development of eighteen one-bedroomed flats at 16-18 St Stephen's Avenue complied with the Town Planning Department's restriction on the number of occupants zoned for that area of land but was also a commercial proposition for a small number of investors. The trend here was capitalizing on valuable land by increasing the density of development, often beginning by buying a section with a single house, removing it and building multi-units in its stead. This approach is epitomized by the reinforced brick Paritai Drive development of 1965 (Fig. 8). Similarly, the 'Seabreeze' flats at Birdwood Crescent[10] represented a kind of system-built housing, based on European models. Constructed in reinforced concrete block with Winstone Vibradec floors and long-run roofing, these flats were quickly and economically erected, and were the prototype for the larger-scale apartment buildings. Čačala's confidence in the potential of his materials

9. Rents are documented as £7.10s for a one-bedroomed and £8.5s for a two-bedroomed flat in 1967.

10. Jointly developed by Čačala with the Blumenthals as investors, this scheme comprised six two-bedroomed and three one-bedroomed flats with sundecks and living rooms facing over the city and Waitemata Harbour.

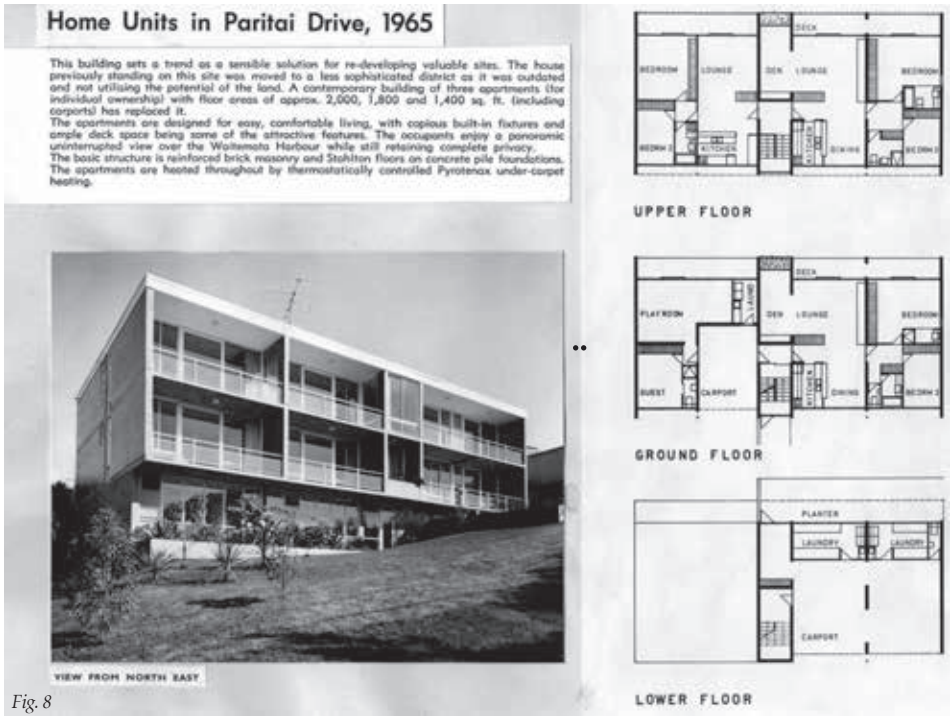


Fig. 8

Fig. 8: Home units in Paritai Drive, 1965. Čačala Family Collection.

to extend to high-rise developments continued to grow. A 27-unit block of flats at 49 St Stephens Avenue was completed in 1969-70. Next, for E. Lichtenstein & Co Ltd., an Onehunga Wool scouring company, he designed the six-storey block of 60 one-bedroomed flats in Gladstone Road, Parnell (now the Barrycourt Motel), which was one of the tallest buildings in Auckland to use concrete block structurally. By 1978, also for the Lichtensteins, the Northcrest Apartment block of nineteen flats at the corner of Kepa Road and Kupe Street in Orakei was finished, proving the reliability of the material and even (controversially) slightly exceeding the height restriction for the area.

A cursory tally of the developments listed in Čačala's job book for the two prosperous decades from 1954 until 1978 shows that the inner-eastern suburbs of Auckland were populated with over twenty Čačala-designed apartment blocks, with others appearing on the North Shore and in Herne Bay.[11] Generously proportioned, with floor areas typically of 1400, 1600 and 2000 square feet (or 131, 150 and 185 square metres), these were distinctive and luxurious flats, which Peter Shaw describes as presenting a "convincingly 'modern' look to their inhabitants. Much use was made of textured wall finishes, including hessian, exposed aggregate and a variety of sprayed-on surface finishes, which could be highly effective if used sparingly." Shaw concludes, "Cacala, employing a minimal analogy, advocated a certain amount of repetition of motifs in order to produce a unified effect in matters of form, texture and colour" (1991: 125).

This tendency towards standardization shows that as a European modernist working in New Zealand in the post-war period, Čačala endeavoured to overcome distance by reiterating the Bauhaus aesthetic which had nurtured him. His interpretations of this abstraction in the local context were circumscribed by the limited tastes and resources of his period, but amongst his fellow émigrés, he found a sympathetic clientele. His multi-units introduced the principles of functionalist architecture to the private housing development context. The re-

11. The job book includes the following:

1954 Four two-bedroomed apartments, 100 St Stephen's Avenue, Parnell

1958 Eighteen one-bedroomed apartments, 16-18 St Stephen's Avenue, Parnell

1960 Fifteen one-bedroomed apartments, 13-15 Freemont Street, Parnell

1962 Seafield Flats, nine apartments, 3 Birdwood Crescent, Parnell

1962 Two apartments, Titai Street, Orakei

1962 Fifteen apartments, Milford Road

1963 Four apartments, Glendowie

1963 Rodnal flats and house

1963 Eight apartments, Gillies Avenue, Epsom

1963 Apartments, Hamilton Road, Herne Bay

1964 Six apartments with shops, Coates Avenue, Orakei

1964 Three apartments, 5 Hempton Drive, Orakei

1964 27 apartments (eight studio, eleven one-bedroomed, seven two-bedroomed and a penthouse), 49 St Stephen's Avenue, Parnell

1965 Apartments, 11 Mt Eden Road, Epsom

1966 Thirty apartments, View Road, Mt Eden

1967 Twelve apartments for Wiseman, Edenvale Road, Mt Eden

1968 Thirty apartments, 49 Esplanade Road, Mt Eden

1970 Eighteen two-bedroomed apartments, 9a Esplanade Road, Mt Eden

1970 Fifty apartments, 33a Edenvale Crescent, Mt Eden

1970 Sixty-one apartments, 18 Gladstone Road, Parnell (now Barrycourt Motel)

1973 Two flats and a house for Mr Bennett, 69 Ngapuhi Road, Remuera

1973 Five apartments, 33 Arthur Street, Ellerslie

1973 Four apartments, 12 Coleridge Street, Grey Lynn

1974 Northcrest Apartments, 160 Kepa Road, Orakei

sulting buildings responded to the reality of commercial imperatives without compromising the way in which the visual logic of the architecture derived from the qualities of materials and the nature of construction processes. By maintaining the aspirations of modernism in this way, Čačala demonstrates his lasting commitment to the International Style, creating a crystalline architecture which endures in its pavlova paradise setting.

References

Binsley, J. (2004). Straight Edge. *New Zealand Home and Entertaining,* (August-September), 72.

Bond, S. (1965, July 24). Church Affairs: Plans for Two New Manurewa Churches; Latest Styles. *Auckland Star*. Čačala Family Collection.

Exhibition House at Manurewa (1966). *New Zealand Home and Garden,* (November), 34-37.

Firth, C. (1949). *State Housing in New Zealand*. Wellington: Ministry of Works.

G. C. Goode & Co. Ltd, Factory at Otara (1967). *Home and Building*, *29*(12), cover, 58-59.

House in New Zealand by V. O. Cacala, Architect (1960). *Arts and Architecture,* (December), 26.

Il Verde "Fuori Scala" (1962). *Domus*, *391*(6), 47.

Interior-Exterior Harmony Created by Planting an Indoor Garden and Repeating Inside Colour Outdoors (1961). *The Mirror* (August), 50-51, 58.

John Webster & Co., Factory at Exmouth Street (1963). *The New Zealand Draper*, *43*(517), 12.

Mitchell, A. (1972). *The Half-Gallon Quarter-Acre Pavlova Paradise*. Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs.

Plischke, E. A. (1989). *Ein Leben mit Architektur*. Vienna: Locker Verlag.

Reid, G. E. (1992). Vladamir [*sic*] Cacala and the Gelb House (1955). *Interstices,* (2), 75-83.

Sensitive Unity Emphasized by Auckland Architect Vlad Cacala (1963, June 10). *Auckland Star*, p. 20.

Shaw, P. (1991). *New Zealand Architecture from Polynesian Beginnings to 1990*. Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton.

Tyler, L. (2007). Vladimir Oldrich Čačala, Architect, 1926-2007. *Architecture New Zealand,* (September-October), 29-30.

The Uncluttered Look – Inside and Out (1965, November 13). *Auckland Star*, p. 11.

Your New House … Or Would a Flat Suit You Better? (1953). *Design Review*, *5*(4), 88-89.

An Architectural History
of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation

Gay Sweely

During the 1960s and 70s, many important structures in Christchurch were unsympathetically demolished due to the lack of heritage laws and the introduction of new construction codes for withstanding seismic activity. Noted historian John Wilson recorded some of these buildings in *Lost Christchurch* (1984). Four years later, the heritage-protected synagogue of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation in Gloucester Street met the same demise. In the middle of that year, the site contained only rubble from a building that had been loved and admired by many: Jews, local residents and visitors alike. Today, few people walking in Gloucester Street would realize that a once-stately polychrome building proudly occupied what is now a vacuum of asphalt paving.

This paper outlines the design, construction and ultimate loss of T. S. Lambert's Christchurch synagogue. To contextualize the building's design and construction, the paper also considers earlier synagogues in Australia and other New Zealand cities. The final section discusses the loss of the Gloucester Street building and the re-use of various elements from it in the replacement, Durham Street synagogue, which continues to serve the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation's present-day needs.

T. S. Lambert's Synagogue

In the early 1860s, gold was discovered on the West Coast near Hokitika, and a small group of Jewish miners and merchants established a congregation on the goldfields. When the gold deposits subsequently dwindled, the Jews of Hokitika and South Westland settled in the Canterbury area. The *Torah* from the Hokitika congregation was sent and proudly displayed in Christchurch (CHC, 1963b: 11). This combined congregation offered lectures, meetings and social functions during the late 1860s, as recorded in various articles, advertisements and notices in the local newspaper, the *Press*.

In 1870, the Rev. Isaac Zachariah arrived in Christchurch from the West Coast and, until 1905, provided substantial leadership, hitherto offered only by lay members. During the 1870s, New Zealand Anglo-Jewish Associations and the Jewish Philanthropic Society were formed, as well as a Hebrew school (though informal until 1890) for the study of Judaic literature in the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation.[1]

Although the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation was steadily growing, Jewish immigration to New Zealand had historically been low. In the 1870s and 80s, Jews immigrating to New Zealand and Australia were no longer only from Great Britain. The majority of the new immigrants were eastern-European Jews escaping waves of pogroms and massive episodes of oppression. The Hebrew congregation in Canterbury had expanded so much by 1875 that a meeting was held

1. These developments were reported in the local newspapers, the *Lyttelton Times*, the *Press* (Christchurch) and the *Otago Daily Times*. The newspapers often carried notices or reports of interest to the Jewish community, especially those solemn days observed throughout the year. In addition, news from other New Zealand Jewish communities was also reported by the local press. The Archives of the Christchurch Hebrew Congregation contain a large number of newspaper clippings, from which many of the details in the present account are taken. Further details were obtained from personal interviews with S. Cook and S. Bures.

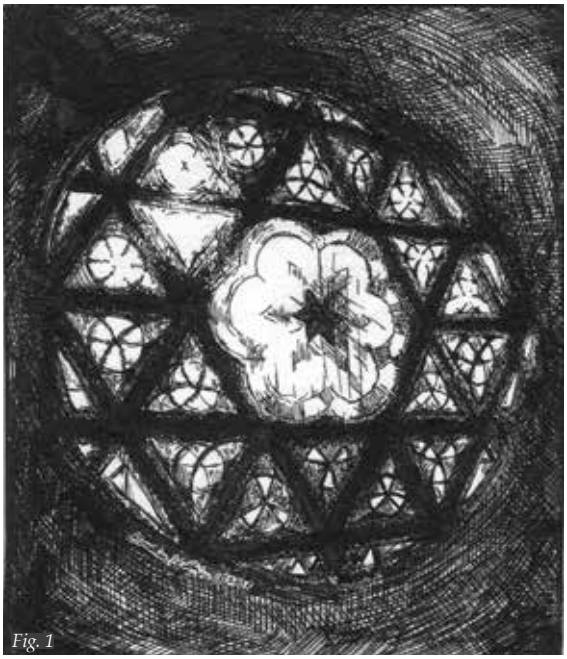


Fig. 1: The circular Star of David stained-glass window in Lambert's building. Drawn by Jonathan Rollins, Department of Art & Design, Eastern Kentucky University.

Fig. 2: The Ark. Drawn by Jonathan Rollins.

to discuss more suitable accommodation. A building committee was selected to decide on congregational requirements, available funding and an appropriate architect. The Canterbury-area Jewish community banded together and raised, in a very short time, £4,000 – quite a feat for such a small congregation. The prominent Christchurch architect Thomas Stoddart Lambert (1840-1915) was selected.

Lambert's designs in Canterbury prior to 1880 had included churches, residences, schools, commercial buildings and rural hotels. The Jewish community would have been aware of many of these structures, but they were probably more aware of his commercial buildings on High Street for Mark Marks, W. Simpson and B. Simpson, as Marks was a member of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation (CHC, 1963c: 11). Born in Selkirk, Scotland, Lambert served his articles there before extensive travel and a brief residence in London. He arrived in New Zealand in early 1866, working on various structures north of the Wellington Province. In 1874, he moved to Wellington but was not optimistic about building prospects there and thus moved to Christchurch, where he entered the office of Frederick Strouts, who in 1871 had been one of four founding members of the Canterbury Association of Architects (Stacpoole, 1976: 163). Under Strouts' supervision, Lambert "personally surveyed the entire city of Christchurch" (*Cyclopedia*, 1903: 581). In 1877, Lambert formed his own architectural firm. He was most likely selected for the new synagogue because of his professional reputation: "His contracts [were] finished without extras, and their total cost [was] usually somewhat under his written estimate previously given" (*Cyclopedia*, 1903: 581).

A successful local Christchurch contractor, W. Prudhoe, was selected for the synagogue construction. Prudhoe had served as contractor for architect Samuel Farr, known for the Christchurch Mechanics Institute, and had completed several Government contracts (Akaroa Civic Trust, n.d.). An 1880 newspaper article reported that the new synagogue design was unique and that its façade design would be clad in blue, white and yellow stone, with exterior walls of brick. As the account notes, the new synagogue was completed in November 1880:

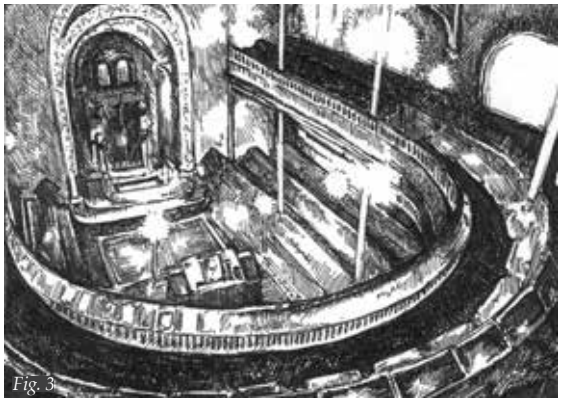


Fig. 3: The lower level. Drawn by Jonathan Rollins.

Fig. 4: The interior, showing the ceiling, gallery and circular window. Drawn by Jonathan Rollins.

> The exterior fronting Gloucester Street East has an elevation of much originality, the chief feature in it being a large circular window, the tracery of which takes the form of the double triangle (Fig. 1). On either side are smaller windows harmonising with the first, and below are a pair of handsomely panelled entrance doors... admission is gained through a vestibule, paved with marble in a lozenge pattern.... Two doors hung so as to open in either direction, lead to the main building. Here, the most striking feature is the decorations at the South end of the building. This is where the Ark is situated (Fig. 2). The Ark itself is a large receptacle, lined with red velvet and enclosed with two massively carved sliding doors. In front of these hangs a white silk veil.… The gallery is supported by iron fluted pillars, having capitals ornamented with lilies and pomegranates (Figs. 3 and 4).... The lighting by day is provided by four double windows on each side, filled with cathedral glass, and outlined by glass of more brilliant colours, the same colours being introduced into the large North window. (New Synagogue, 1880: 2)

The Christchurch synagogue was an eclectic mixture of architectural styles. Lambert designed in the classical style, as well as the Venetian Gothic and Gothic styles.[2] It was a basilica-like structure: the white vertical rusticated bands could easily be massive columns or pilasters. A classical pediment appeared at the apex, but Gothic window hoods broke up the classical approach.

Lambert's use of rustication and constructional polychromy placed the synagogue comfortably within the Canterbury architectural aesthetics of the time. Lambert effectively married classical, Gothic and Scottish elements into a very distinctive South Island design. The small Canterbury congregation seemingly was pleased with both the interior design, which was reminiscent of British synagogues, and the ornamental exterior: "It had taken more than a year in building and all the records show that it was considered by all present to be a very handsome building and worthy of the Jewish citizens of Christchurch at that time" (CHC, 1963c: 14).

Early Synagogues in New Zealand

The mid-nineteenth-century English Jews who settled in New Zealand would have been familiar with many synagogues around Great Britain, and perhaps in Continental Europe and Australia. On the continent, architects of synagogues built during this period were experimenting with various styles, such as Roman-

2. "The great majority of the new larger commercial buildings of the 1870s and 1880s, and beyond … were Italianate, a style common in other New Zealand cities … [and] many of the city's imposing Italianate buildings came also from the hands of other architects like T. S. Lambert" (Wilson et al., 2008: 81).

esque, Byzantine, classical, Moorish and German Gothic. However, this eclecticism in design did not surface in the architecture of English Jewry (for example, Hambro and Bevis Marks in London), for reasons of discretion and financial constraints. The Gothic Revival style of the Church of England was held in anathema by Jews for its Christian connotations.

Jewish settlers remaining in Australia after the gold rush of 1851 moved to urban areas, founded *minyans* (ten Jewish males, the number required by Judaic law to hold a worship service), and built synagogues. The first colonial synagogues were temporary wooden, box-like structures. As their communities expanded and became more established, permanent synagogues were planned, designed and erected. The Great Synagogue at Sydney, facing Hyde Park, was built in 1878. The interior is characterized by its "semi-centrally planned seating arrangement" and gallery (Crighton, 1985: 153; also see Summerson, 1963: 338). Designed by Thomas Rowe, it is a magnificent building mixing the Byzantine style with Gothic characteristics. The twin towers on the façade are of Pyrmont sandstone, characteristically moulded and carved in the period style. The spacious interior is resplendent with cast-iron columns, plaster decorations on the arches, and a panelled and groined ceiling. The stained-glass windows and fine light pendants render the interior jewel-like.

A *minyan* was achieved in Auckland in the 1840s, and these Jewish males held services in a warehouse loft in Shortland Street, owned by David Nathan until 1847.[3] "The number of male worshipers was very few, as at this time there were only thirty-three Jews altogether in Auckland – men, women and children" (Balkind, 1928: 23). From 1847 until 1858, a separate room in the warehouse served as the worship area for the small congregation. Sometime in 1858, the Auckland congregation leased a one-storey wooden building under construction, in Emily Place at the top of Shortland Street. Since the building was only one storey, the women had to be seated behind the men, instead of in galleries, as is the Jewish custom (Rivkin, 1971: 339-40; Hachlili, 1998: 24, 84).[4]

The small Jewish congregation in Wellington preceded the formation of any congregation in the South Island. A *minyan* was established during the 1840s, and this congregation held temporary services in the residence of the congregation's President for *Shabbat* (Sabbath) worship.[5] This synagogue served the Wellington community well until growing numbers in the late 1860s dictated that larger premises were needed.

The first Jewish settlements in the South Island were at Nelson and Timaru. The congregations of Dunedin and Canterbury were organized later, most likely due to the fact that these were Christian church-related, planned settlements. Similar to the other Jewish settlements in the colony, Dunedin's first synagogue was a wooden structure on lease-hold land in George Street that was purchased, repaired and altered in the late 1850s (Balkind, 1928: 10). The 43-male congregation adhered to the English Jewish rituals and placed themselves under the jurisdiction of Dr N. M. Adler, the Chief Rabbi in London, with services conducted by lay members and readers.

The Dunedin Jewish congregation definitely viewed themselves as fortunate. Not only did they possess a magnificent Pentateuch (the scroll of the Mosaic Law essential to every synagogue) and a baldachin (a canopy for special ceremonies, such as weddings), they also were granted a separate cemetery by the Otago

3. There is no archival information linking the South Island's Louis Edward Nathan to David Nathan of Auckland (Clements, 2008).

4. There is no ancient tradition governing the separation of the sexes or placement of women in a gallery. The practice can be traced to thirteenth-century synagogues in Europe.

5. The rapid growth in numbers must have been due, in part, to the shift of the seat of the government from Auckland to Wellington in February 1865.

Provincial Council. By the early 1860s, the Dunedin congregation was outgrowing its wooden synagogue and had to consider building a larger structure on a "more suitable and central site" (Balkind, 1928: 12). Thus, in early 1863, the congregation advertised for a permanent minister and began to discuss the feasibility of a new synagogue in a different location.

In 1863, William Henry Clayton (1823-77) was awarded the tender for the new Dunedin synagogue. When Clayton became a partner of William Mason, he brought with him this commission for the synagogue. Clayton, who is best known for his wooden Government Buildings in Wellington (1876), Government House in Wellington (1868-71), and the Christchurch Government Buildings in Cathedral Square (1875-77), had only recently arrived in Dunedin from Tasmania. He was appointed Colonial Architect in 1869 (Crighton, 1985: vi).

The Dunedin synagogue, the southern-most synagogue in the world (Judd, n.d.), was designed in a classical style in 1881, with a facade of Oamaru limestone. The symmetrical design has a vertical, uplifting emphasis created by tapering columns.[6] The Corinthian columns correspond aesthetically with the Hebrew inscription on the frieze. Other than the inscription and the *Magen David* (a six-pointed star) in the centre of the pediment, the only other Jewish emblem on the façade was a *menorah* (a candelabrum for Jewish services) above the apex of the pediment. The classical style was understood to tread on neutral ground, "with few religious associations of its own" (De Breffny, 1978: 175). In addition, the classical style also conveyed a desirable sense of antiquity (Gunman, 1981: 103-21).

The Canterbury Hebrew Congregation

By 1860, small Jewish congregations had been established in the major cities of the North and South Islands, with the exception of Christchurch. The Jews had not sailed to New Zealand as members of any organized group, but it can be assumed that they were seeking a land where they could freely practise their faith and safely raise their families. Early New Zealand Jewish-immigrant Louis Edward Nathan was most likely in search of a nascent mercantile area and a new life in Canterbury: a predominantly High Church Anglican colony. Nathan, later elected as the first president of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation, was one of the first Jews in Canterbury (CHC, 1963a: 13; Clements, n.d.).[7] The first record of the presence of a Jewish community on the Canterbury Plain was printed in a newspaper "call for subscriptions" to aid former Moroccan Jews.[8] Nathan returned to England (perhaps for supplies or his family) and arrived back in Canterbury by 1864 (CHC, 1963b: 1). Prior to that time, there is no record of any recognized structure or site of Jewish worship in the Canterbury region. In January 1864, a congregation was established, and Nathan elected to the chair.

The group met regularly in Nathan's home in St. Asaph Street, officiated by Mark Marks (CHC, 1963c: 11). To build the first Canterbury synagogue, £300 was subscripted immediately, and a request for government assistance discussed. Subsequently, a subscription list was left in all of the area newspaper offices and many commercial premises in Christchurch and nearby Lyttelton. A general meeting concerning the possible site and design of the proposed synagogue was also held the same month. In June, tenders for the design were called for in the local newspaper.

6. The style of the Dunedin synagogue is along the lines of More Park, Hertfordshire, especially the central pedimented porch and the verticality of the structure.

7. Nathan served as president of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation from 1863-64, 1867, 1870, 1873, 1875 and 1879.

8. This request was placed by Henry Moss of the Jewish Central Committee in Lyttelton (Call for Subscriptions, 1860: 5).

Fig. 5

Fig. 5: The exterior of the new Durham Street synagogue. Photograph by Gay Sweely.

The first building planned for the Jewish community in the Canterbury region was a small wooden *shul* (in Yiddish, a house of worship). It was decided that Divine Services would be held in this structure until a proper synagogue could be financed, but the completion of this modest building was a testament to a group of people who had survived displacement and relocation (CHC, 1963b: 11). Unfortunately, nothing, at present, is known of the form or appearance of this structure. Primarily intended to serve as a building for Hebrew instruction, the function almost dictates a modest design – most likely resembling a small wooden-gabled school of the era.

The architect for the 1864 *shul* was Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort (1825-98), who was, like Lambert, a member of the Canterbury Association of Architects (Stacpoole, 1976: 163). At the time Mountfort submitted his design proposal for the Canterbury *shul*, he was also overseeing work on the new Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings (1858-65). The site for the *shul* was on inner-city Gloucester Street, only a short distance from the Provincial Council Buildings. By 1865, the new building was complete. The congregation rapidly acquired necessary furniture and items for its services from Europe and Palestine.

In the latter 1860s and early 1870s, as outlined at the beginning of this paper, the congregation grew and the decision was made to pursue Christchurch's first proper synagogue, leading to the realization of Lambert's building in 1879-80. Before construction could start, Mountfort's old *shul* building was removed to an adjoining, recently acquired, property, to be used for the congregation's educational and social activities (Lochhead, 1999: 318). The site vacated by the *shul* was then prepared for the new synagogue (CHC, 1963b: 1). M. Harris, congregation president, performed the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone, and a sealed jar was placed inside the foundation stone to commemorate the event.[9]

Lambert's synagogue admirably served the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation for over 100 years. It was the site of a plethora of lectures, bazaars, fund-raising ventures for aid to Jews around the world, and solemn events, such as the observance of Queen Victoria's passing, as well as its significance in the region as

9. It may be assumed that Mountfort, the architect of the early *shul*, was simply too busy to design the replacement synagogue. At that time, Mountfort was continuing his building programme in Rangiora with the Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist (1859-82) for the Rev. Benjamin Woolley Dudley, and he was also supervising construction of the Christchurch Cathedral (Macdonald, 1964; see also Sweely, 1988: 6-23).

Fig. 6

Fig 6: The interior of the Durham Street building. Photograph courtesy of the Press *(Christchurch).*

a Class C heritage building of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (Cattrell, 1985: 62). Renovations were completed in 1963, prior to the observance of the centennial of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation in Christchurch (CHC, 1963c: 40). Lambert's synagogue was a survivor, by the mid-1980s nestled between low-rise mixed-use buildings, including a Masonic Lodge, an art gallery and, a little to the west, Christchurch Girls' High School.

Another New Synagogue for Christchurch

In 1987, serious cracks in the foundations of Lambert's building were of great concern to the congregation. While the architect's design was a monument to the community and the synagogue had served its purpose and the community most admirably, time had inevitably taken its toll. The only solution was to meet elsewhere. The congregation purchased a former Brethren Assembly Hall in Durham Street, to be redesigned to include a social hall, offices, kitchen and a worship area. This task was given to the Christchurch firm of Skews, Hay and Archer. A new synagogue on Durham Street was also commissioned.

In order to retain some of the beautiful decorations from Lambert's building – and a fragment of Jewish history in Canterbury – Samuel Cook, a prominent Christchurch contractor and synagogue member, was directed to salvage important portions of the old synagogue for re-use in the new building. In early 1988, the old façade was scaffolded to remove the Star of David circular window, entrance doors and stained-glass windows. Stone from the Gloucester Street front and Durham Street side was carefully removed and incorporated into the new façade and walls. Lastly, Cook's crew painstakingly removed the inner doors, *bimah*, seats and desks, the upper portion of the Ark with the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments), and the Ark sliding doors. All of the wooden items had been constructed from native kauri and were remarkably well preserved. By 6 May 1988, one lone section of rubble was all that remained on the site of Lambert's historic synagogue.

The Canterbury Hebrew Congregation's new synagogue was consecrated on 14 May 1988, with about 120 people attending the service, led by the Rev. Jeffrey Leverton. The exterior included the nineteenth-century stonework preserved and used in new ways – in paths, border walls and the frontal piece, which resembles a stone tablet (Fig. 5) – while behind those officiating at the service were the redesigned stained-glass windows from Lambert's synagogue, enshrined by a kauri feature wall and now at eye level (Fig. 6).

Reflections

Expatriate Jews, part of a never-ending worldwide diaspora of expatriates, sought final refuge in the South Island of New Zealand in the latter portion of the nineteenth century. In addition to unconventional meeting places, the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation built three houses of religious worship in the region. Lambert's synagogue (1880-1988) should be remembered in the architectural history of the Jews of New Zealand as a jewel built for a small group of expatriate settlers on the Canterbury Plain, seeking to find their way in a time of upheaval, displacement and relocation. These expatriates, like so many before them, were seeking a way to express their religious views in art and architecture in a new land. During the centenary celebrations of 11 August 1963, a special prayer was presented by the clergy officiating in honour of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation that built "such a beautiful Synagogue … a source of great pride and inspiration to all of us who are the inheritors of those worthy Jewish Pioneers" (CHC, 1963c: 42). The demolition of Lambert's nineteenth-century synagogue was a major heritage loss for Christchurch and the Jewish community of New Zealand. Its replacement with a utilitarian carpark continues to rankle with historians, although more generally, the memory of Lambert's synagogue has started to fade. It is hoped that this research will help to keep it alive.

References

Akaroa Civic Trust (n.d.). Walk Akaroa. Retrieved 15 August, 2007, from http://www.historicakaroa.co.nz/buildingdetail

Balkind, V. F. (1928). A Contribution to the History of Jews in New Zealand. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of New Zealand, Canterbury.

Call for Subscriptions (1860, April 18). *Lyttelton Times*, p. 5.

Canterbury Hebrew Congregation [CHC]. (1963a). Canterbury Hebrew Congregation History. Archives of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation, Christchurch.

Canterbury Hebrew Congregation [CHC]. (1963b). Centennial Address. Archives of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation, Christchurch.

Canterbury Hebrew Congregation [CHC]. (1963c). *The First One-hundred Years of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation*. Christchurch: The President and Board of Management of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation.

Cattrell, J. (Ed.) (1985). *Historic Buildings of Canterbury and South Canterbury: A Register of Classified Buildings*. Wellington: New Zealand Historic Places Trust.

Clements, M. (2008). Pers. comm. to the author (29 June).

Clements, M. (n.d.). Notes on Jewish Participation in New Zealand History. Retrieved 2 July, 2007, from http://www.nzjewisharchives.org/history.htm

Crighton, S. A. (1985). William Henry Clayton: Colonial Architect. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

The Cyclopedia of New Zealand (1903). Canterbury ed. vol. 3. Christchurch: Horace J. Weeks.

De Breffny, B. (1978). *The Synagogue*, London: Macmillan.

Goldman, L. M. (1958). *History of the Jews in New Zealand*, Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed.

Gunman, J. (Ed.) (1981). *Ancient Synagogues: The State of Research*. Chico, California: Scholars Press.

Hachlili, R. (1998). *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Diaspora.* Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.

Judd, S. (n.d.). Jews in New Zealand. Retrieved 10 July, 2008, from http://vital.org.nz/nzjews.html

Kadish, S. (2006). *Jewish Heritage in England: An Architectural Guide*. Swindon, England: English Heritage.

Krinsky, C. H. (1996). *Synagogues of Europe: Architecture, History, Meaning.* New York: Courier Dover Publications.

Lochhead, I. (1999). *A Dream of Spires: Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival*. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press.

Macdonald, G. R. (1964). *The Macdonald Dictionary of Biography.* Christchurch: Canterbury Museum.

New Synagogue (1880, December 16). *Press*, p. 2.

Rivkin, E. (1971). *The Shaping of Jewish History: A Radical Interpretation*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Stacpoole, J. (1976). *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand*. Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed.

Summerson, J. (1963). *Architecture in Britain: 1530-1830*. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Sweely, G. C. (1988). The Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist, Rangiora, 1860-1988. Unpublished manuscript held in Christchurch Library Archives, Christchurch.

Wilson, J. (1984). *Lost Christchurch.* Auckland: Lansdowne Press.

Wilson, J. et al. (2008). Contextual Historical Overview for Christchurch City: Final Draft Report for Comment. Christchurch City Council, Christchurch. Retrieved 2 July, 2008, from http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Christchurch/Heritage/Publications/ChristchurchCityContextualHistoryOverview/ChristchurchCityContextualHistoryOverviewIntroduction.pdf

Transnational World:
Imagining an Afterspace

Rowan Fraser

In our increasingly transnational world we are all made migrants by the eradication of place. The supremacy of the *now* over the fumbling *here* has remodelled our spatio-temporal set up. The result is a thin layer of *afterspace* and the constant duress of the present.

Transnationalism has a long history in the form of international migration. It is nevertheless being reconsidered in light of recent technological advances as something utterly contemporary. It now refers broadly to the networks, connections and ties that exist at present between individuals, institutions and corporations across borders, existing in *realtime*. This reticulation is facilitated by the globalization of capital and the spread of information and communication technologies. Telecommunications are integral to transnationalism.

Bataille sardonically argued that the purpose of modern science, and the sole criteria by which to judge its efficacy, was the extent that it "makes *impossible* a definitive image of the universe" (Goetz, 2001: 75). Einstein's theories relativized and revolutionized our *definitive image of the universe*. The prodigious enlargement of this image and the incredible precision with which our universe is now studied move it into the unimaginable. We may never have owned a completely secure cosmology, but we have never lived under such an extreme absence of one as we do today. The destruction of our collective worldviews is not without repercussion. We can no longer hang meaning onto our fluid, hyper-defined world. Consequently we arrive at the paradox where the only certainty is that nothing is certain.

In the absence of meaning caused by the breakdown of absolutes, we have been asking ourselves *where are we*? It was the Greeks, Beaufret suggests, who "were the first to ask themselves where they were" (Beaufret, 1973: 164). What is remarkable is that this question of being was not asked in relation to essence (*what are we*) but in relation to locality (*where* are we). Being comes into question when we are no longer sure of the *place*, when the world becomes strange, incomprehensible. If we ask ourselves where we are it is because the nature of the place is not assigned. Tradition, myth and science are no longer authoritative in telling us where we are. Plato, in *Sophist*, states that philosophy begins when we stop telling ourselves stories. Philosophy brings with it the loss of orientation and the crisis of localization.

This crisis of localization is compounded and rendered more complex by the freeing of both culture and community from the traditional obligations of geographic locality. Indeed the deterritorialization of culture is in large part responsible for transforming our notion of what constitutes community. Community now assumes a more fluid nature and distance is no longer an impediment to it. The local is compelled to rethink itself. *Place* is replaced by an imagined or symbolic unity built around shared or individual meanings, and where historically this *place* has been spatial, or at least geographic, it now has become temporal. We

no longer rely on space as the platform for communication and culture-sharing but rather on time. For Mackenzie, "*all performance is electronic …* [and it is] *precisely the digitisation of discourses and practices*" which is of interest (2001: 243).

In a transnational world where community and culture operate without regard for territorial boundaries, the sole requirement for meeting is time, and more specifically the *now*. Space, being overcome by telecommunications, becomes ancillary and contingent to time. Time is the agent of unification in the contemporary world. For telecommunications the greatest importance is temporal alignment: one needs someone in the realtime *now* with whom to communicate. Transnational community meets in the *now* but very seldom in the *here* (5.45 p.m. but never mind the place). In this manner *here* becomes subordinate to *now*.

This overcoming of space is certainly dependent on our technology. Throw it all away, and space resurges like a mistreated animal. The relationship between technology, society and the city is well established: a sturdy and weathered ménage à trois. In 1957, Wittfogel used the discovery of subterranean stone granaries in the Middle East to explain the mutual interdependence of technology, society and the city (167-78). These granaries dated from the third millennia BC and were used to store the surplus grain generated by the improved irrigation techniques of the farmers. Childe notes that the generation of surplus was critical in the development of the city, and of society, as it allowed for certain individuals to absent themselves from farming duties in order to specialize and acquire expert knowledge (2001: 4-8). Mumford talks of the way in which thought is made concrete in the form of the city, and how in turn thought is conditioned by the urban form that surrounds it (1938: 77). The city is at once an active agent in the technological output of a society and a passive three-dimensional canvas onto which socio-technological forces are printed. It acts and receives the action.

But how does the marginalization of space inform the contemporary city? Space, de-spatialized by the *now*, waits in the wings of the city. It is relegated to the banks of the rivers, wrapped up with the blue tarpaulins of the informal settlements. It waits to be beckoned from under the fly-overs. It is no longer necessary. It attends its own funeral in the epistemological parlour of the downtown. We might therefore call it *afterspace*, like an afterthought or an aftertaste. It is the afterspace of the city, and it coats like a façade the tower blocks and is plastered to the street signs in the suburbs. It is found down alleyways and in doorways, like the threshold of the city. Its defining characteristic is that it is derived from the present. Afterspace cannot exist beyond the present. Nor can it be invested with meaning, or loaded with data. It is non-memorial, instant now-space. Traditionally the present has come after something, namely the past. Afterspace by its intense presentism is, however, synchronic, simultaneous space. It is not at all independent. It is space without the spatial element, just a spatialized temporality, an instant, a crossing. It is a happening that is non-localizable and entirely contingent. In the city the general level of contingency is very high. Everything is waiting to be experienced and nothing happens independently. The individual is complicit in this contingency.

Afterspace could be considered the spatial home of the transnational. Certainly it is the contingent *here* of the supreme urban *now*. Our bodies still occupy physical Newtonian space, but the space of culture and the development of our community occurs in the despatialized situation of *now*. It is exactly this openness to plurality that transnationalism demands and this is the great freedom to be

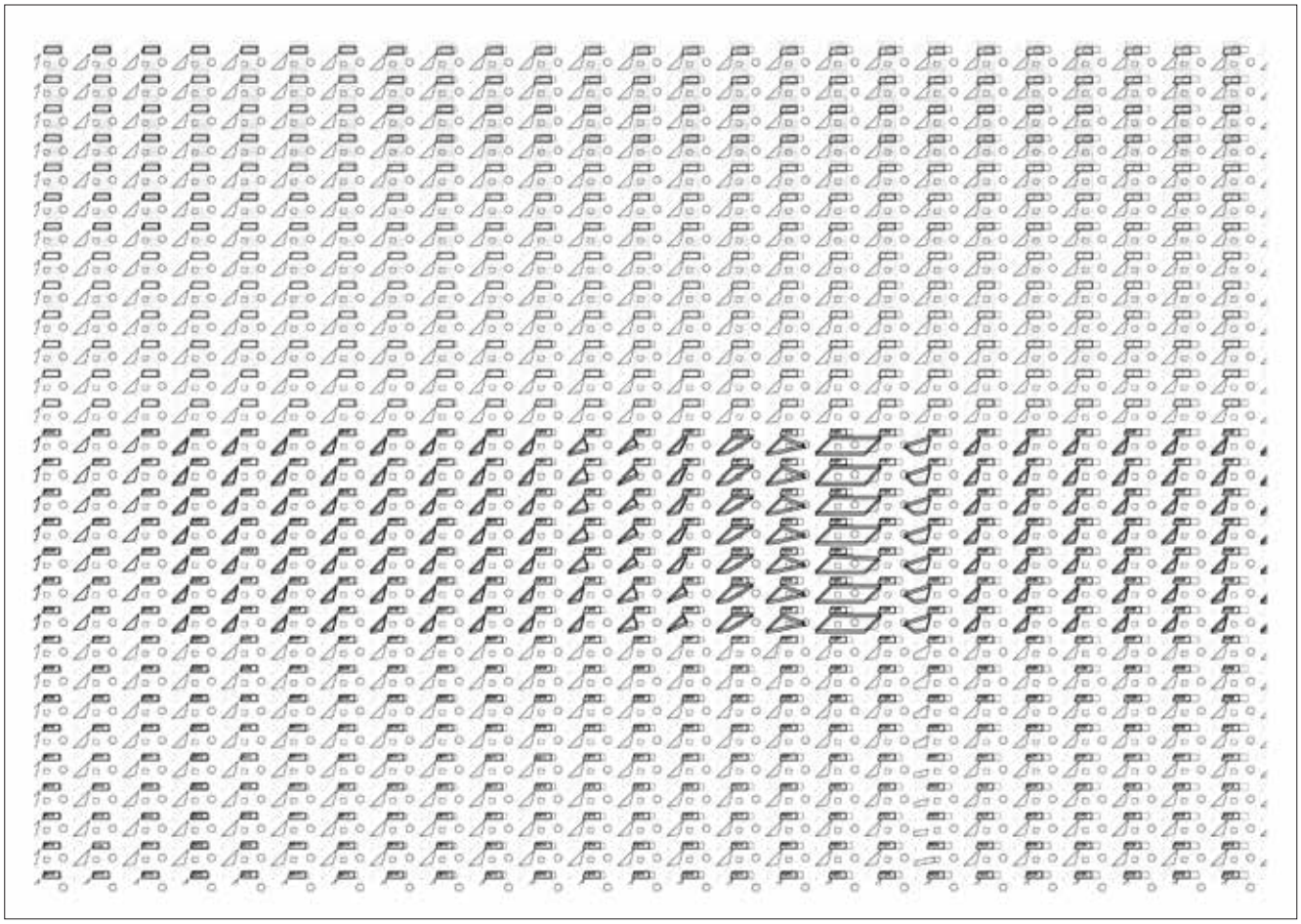


Fig. 1: Afterspace 1. Drawing by Rowan Fraser.

found within a globalized world; the opportunity to entertain a pluralist existence. But it is a voluntary pluralism with which we engage as we choose. In response to the *where are we* of the contemporary migrant, and the *where are we* of the floating transnational, one must answer that *we are now.* As migrants in a placeless world we exist only in the *now* supported by a vagrant afterspace.

New Zealand's bi-culturalism has been criticized from the perspective of multi-culturalism. However multi-culturalism itself still demands certain qualities of social construction which transnationalism has done away with. Afterspace as a transnational product is not concerned with cultural protectionism; rather it advocates a freer exchange of culture. It is in favour of cultural swapping, sampling and upgrading. It is a spatial server from which we distribute culture. Thus it adheres to a general and controversial digitization of culture in which the city as a site of cultural generation is lodged squarely as a structural facilitator.

These developments are deplored by some. Virilio et al, in a sort of *noir* urbanism, shout geriatrically from their chairs (Hubbard, 2006: 139). People rightly complain of Virilio's relentless negativism and his moral approbation is tiresome. But society is not being eroded by new technologies, rather it is being recreated – the ménage à trois has purchased a digital toy. His are the pessimistic outcries of an older generation, their jackets lined with Victorian felt. Despite them, however, we are rushing headlong into an enamoured *Gesellschaft* whose backdrop is a neo-spatial afterspace and whose temporal enacting is the continual, exacting, urgency of the *now.*

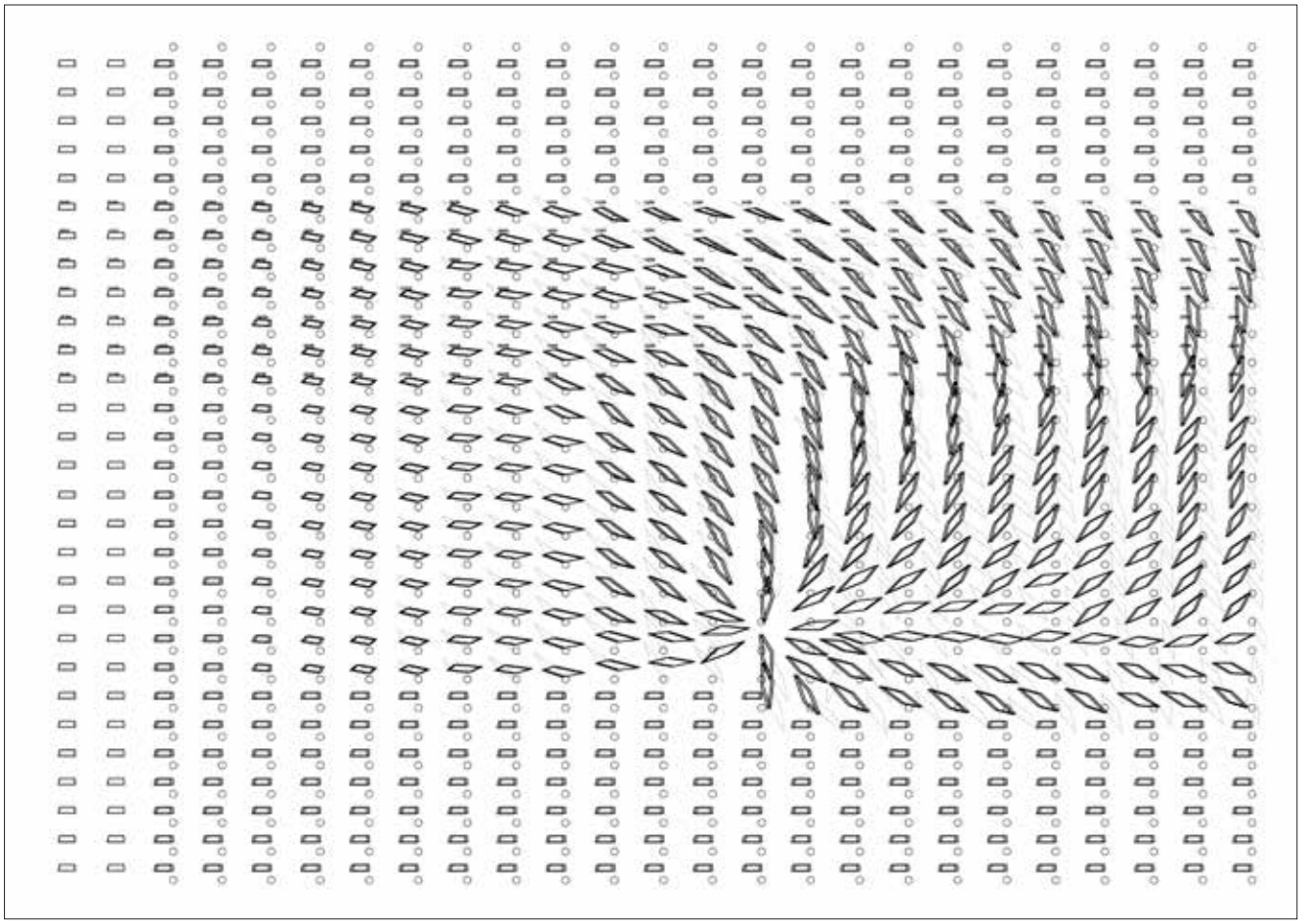


Fig. 2: Afterspace 2. Drawing by Rowan Fraser.

References

Beaufret, J. (1973). *Dialogue avec Heidegger.* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

Childe, V. G. (2000). The Urban Revolution. In M. Pacione (Ed.), *The City: Critical Concepts in the Social Science,* vol. I, (pp. 1-14). London: Routledge.

Cooper, J. M. (Ed.) (1997). *The Complete Works/Plato.* Indianapolis: Hackett.

Goetz, B. (2001). *La Dislocation.* Paris: Les Éditions de la Passion.

Hubbard, P. (2006). *The City.* London: Routledge.

Mackenzie, J. (2001). *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance.* London: Routledge.

Mumford, L. (1938). *The Culture of Cities.* New York: Harcourt Brace.

Sassen, S. (2000). *Global Cities.* London: Routledge.

Wittfogel, C. A. (1957). *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Finalists for the Inaugural
Simon Devitt Prize for Photography

Simon Devitt & Julia Gatley

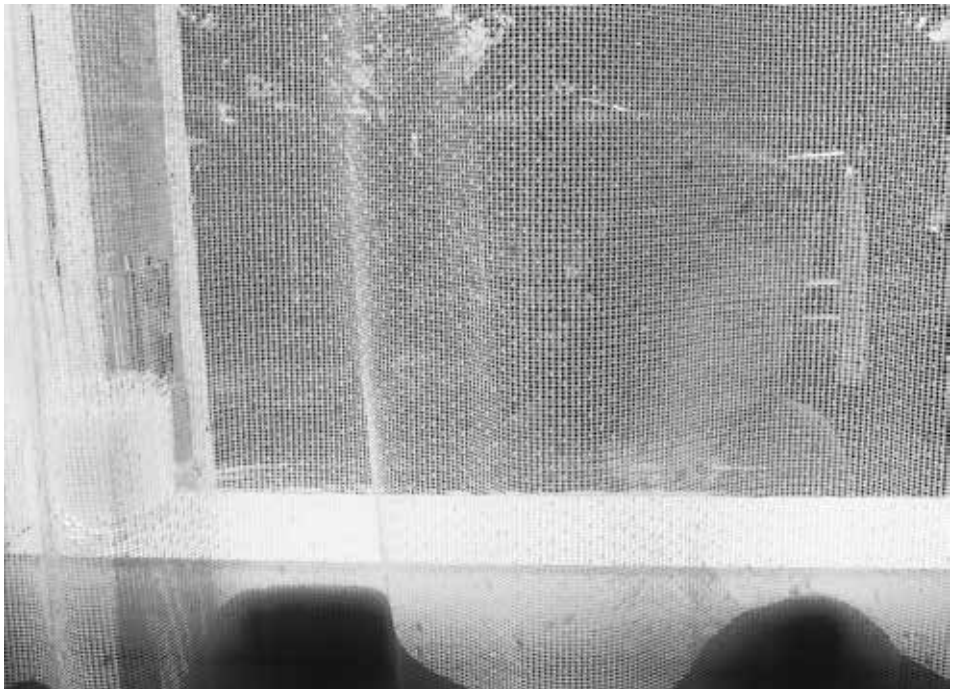
The Simon Devitt Prize for Photography was established in the School of Architecture & Planning at The University of Auckland in 2008. The Prize recognizes the best photograph in architecture. This year, Simon invited and judged photographs under the theme of "Beauty and Decay". The ten finalists are published here. The winner will be announced at the School prize-giving on 27 November and will be published in the November-December issue of *Architecture New Zealand.*

Patrick Loo, *Unpleasant Occurrence*.

J. Marmoot, *Untitled 7.*

Nick O'Leary, *Bird.*

Rayneil Singh, *Maria*.



Klaus Carson, *Domestic Beauty*.

Yoon Yang Lee, *Noon*.

Rowan Fraser & Josh Stewart, *Photo A*.

Yong Hwang, *Untitled*.

Sam Cowper, *Harry*.

David Todd, *Tunnel Vision*.

After the Crash
Thomas Daniell

Review by Andrew Barrie

Thomas Daniell, *After the Crash: Architecture in Post-Bubble Japan* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008).

Western architectural critics are tempted to write about Japan in ways they would describe architecture from few other countries. Only a very brave critic would attempt to define the influence of Church of England theology on Norman Foster's work or to propose the Hagia Sophia as a 'prototype' that still informs the work of contemporary European architects. Architectural commentators, however, have been perfectly willing to discuss Toyo Ito's architecture in relation to Buddhist beliefs or to suggest the roots of SANAA's design for the twenty-first-century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa can be found in sixteenth-century Japanese palace architecture.

To be fair to Western commentators, they have often been led astray by the locals. The tendency to interpret Japan's contemporary architecture through relatively obscure parts of its cultural history or architectural heritage began in the 1920s, when Japan's increasingly nationalist authorities demanded new buildings be built according to an 'oriental taste'. The progressive Japanese architects then advocating European-style modernism began, largely as a political strategy to make their ideas more palatable, promoting an interpretation of certain strains of Japanese traditional architecture as a form of proto-modernism. These ideas were picked up and disseminated by Bruno Taut and others, and Japan's traditions became one of the few vernacular reference points deemed compatible with modernist ideals, which otherwise sought a clean break with the past.

This use of Japanese culture took a new turn in the 1970s, when a new generation of commentators and architects under the leadership of Arata Isozaki began expounding the importance of hitherto obscure spiritual and anthropological concepts. This dubious anthropology was denounced at the time as an attempt by the architects involved to exoticize Japanese architecture, and by extension their own work, but the ideas found a foothold and were repeated so regularly as to become clichés.

Of course, there are connections between Japan's cultural anthropology and its contemporary architecture, but locating these often requires looking past much more immediate influences and pervasive ideas. These include the architectural implications of the unique urban structure of Japanese cities, massive demographic changes in the society, and the character of the local construction industry. Japan's slow-motion economic crash in the early 1990s made apparent the frivolousness of much of what had gone before and marked the emergence of a new seriousness in Japanese architecture. Architects dropped the wildly experimental approach that characterized the 1980s, and began focusing on the objective realities of Japan's social, economic and urban situation.

It is this clear-headed reconsideration of architectural fundamentals that provides the key themes for Thomas Daniell's *After the Crash: Architecture in Post-Bubble Japan*. As befits its serious subject matter, *After the Crash* is a sober volume. Within its simple black-on-white cover, the 200-odd A5 pages are sparely illustrated with black-and-white photos and drawings; the text has priority. The text consists of revised versions of 25 of Daniell's essays and articles written for a variety of architecture and design journals. As befits a period in which big issues are earnestly reconsidered, these essays offer lucid critique and insightful observation. Daniell describes how a good deal of what seems to foreign eyes most extraordinary about contemporary Japanese architecture has emerged from pragmatic responses to the unique constraints of the Japanese context. He explains how, for example, the highly sculptural forms employed in small houses often result simply from the town-planning constraints impinging on the project: the intense pressure to maximize occupiable space on tiny sites often inflates building volumes into the precise angular geometry of the town-planning recession plane envelope.

After the Crash is one of the first English-language books to survey the Japanese scene published since the millennium. As an anthology of essays, some very short, the book is a montage of scenes rather than a comprehensive survey. A number of the essays focus on the work of relatively minor figures (there are two essays on the work of Kiyoshi Sei Takeyama) or on minor works by major figures (Waro Kishi's Hutong House). While it covers the key themes driving contemporary Japanese architecture, as a fairly compact book it necessarily omits many of the key figures (including Kengo Kuma, Tadao Ando, Shigeru Ban) and key works (such as Riken Yamamoto's university campuses, Yoshio Taniguchi's Gallery of Horyuji Treasures). However, if the book is paired with another recent publication with which Daniell was involved – the "Parallel Nippon" issue of the *Japan Architect*, which surveys key Japanese buildings from 1996 to 2006 – the depth of *After the Crash* would complement the JA's breadth to provide what is currently the best record of the post-bubble era.

After the Crash cements Daniell's place as one of the most articulate and astute interpreters of the Japanese architecture scene for Western audiences. Within the necessarily partial coverage created by the book's anthology format, it concisely captures a moment in Japan's architectural history. As Daniell acknowledges in his introduction, however, that moment is already receding into the past. Japan seems at last to be emerging from post-bubble gloom, and the themes of Daniell's essays are giving way to new ideas and approaches. A new generation of architects is emerging whose work, while moderated by the pragmatism of the last decade, returns to the experimental attitude of the bubble era. As these new alignments begin to coalesce, let us hope that commentators can follow Daniell's lead and escape the clichés of the past.

References

Parallel Nippon: Contemporary Japanese Architecture 1996-2006 (2007). *Japan Architect*, *65*(Spring).

La Construction des Villes
Christoph Schnoor

Review by Tanja Poppelreuter

Christoph Schnoor, *La Construction des Villes, Le Corbusiers erstes städtebauliches Traktat von 1910/11* (Zürich: GTA Verlag, 2008). 648 pp. In German and French.

La Construction des Villes (The Construction of Cities) is the title of a manuscript written by the young Le Corbusier while living in Germany in 1910-11. Prompted by his teacher L'Eplattenier, Le Corbusier critically analyzed the literature on city planning, with the overall question in mind of how cities establish spaces that the inhabitants perceive as beautiful or sublime.

Christoph Schnoor, senior lecturer at the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at Unitec in Auckland, teaches – among other subjects – architectural theory and history. In *La Construction des Villes*, Schnoor publishes Le Corbusier's original French text and a careful translation of it into German, and in doing so makes the manuscript amenable for further research. In order to be accessible to a larger scholarly community, an English translation of the manuscript would also be highly desirable.

The experiences and education Le Corbusier drew from in later life can be linked to two early events. In 1907 he departed on a Grand Tour that led him to Italy, Greece, Turkey and other places. In the course of two years, he drew and made watercolours and notes of the highlights of architectural history that he visited. This would be a source for ideas and images for his later publications and helped to shape his architectural standpoint.

The second formative event was the period of 1910-11, during which Le Corbusier wrote *La Construction des Villes*. This part of Le Corbusier's writing and education is now, with the publication of Schnoor's book, fully accessible for the first time.

Le Corbusier researched and wrote most of the manuscript in Munich and Berlin. He summarized the discourses on city planning around 1900 by Karl Henrici, Albert Erich Brinckmann, Camillo Sitte and others. Le Corbusier's main research interests lay in the aesthetic and artistic impacts of city planning. In a concise and careful analysis of the primary and secondary texts, Schnoor succeeds in reconstructing Le Corbusier's understanding and interpretation.

The reason the manuscript for *La Construction des Villes* was not published by Le Corbusier himself lay in his personal life, as well as political developments and the beginning of World War One, which made it impossible to publish a book on a German-centred discourse in France. The manuscript then disappeared in Le Corbusier's estate and was discovered in 1977, but until now was neither wholly published, nor exhaustively analyzed.

Schnoor's book consists of two parts: a critical analysis of the synthesis of the manuscript, and the manuscript itself, together with the images chosen by Le

Corbusier. In the first part, Schnoor carefully retraces Le Corbusier's steps as he researched the manuscript, gives insights as to which texts the Swiss-French architect consulted and what he took from each, and shares his overall understanding of Le Corbusier's interpretation of the earlier texts.

The second part comprises the actual manuscript. This part is very clearly arranged by setting the original French text next to the German translation and using different type-faces and colours. However, the overall design and especially the handling of the images, which are all equally tinted in a greenish hue, make it obvious that this book is primarily about the text rather than the drawings, photographs and sketches. The original manuscript pages and drawings could have been reproduced at a larger scale to aid in readability. Some lack contrast so that details cannot be seen and the greenish hue additionally equalizes and disguises details.

Overall, Schnoor's in-depth analysis of this manuscript sheds new light on the fundamentals of Le Corbusier's intellectual education and background. His understanding of the sixteenth-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio and his reading of the *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753) by the architectural theorist Abbé Laugier are two of the new findings.

In addition, the manuscript conveys background and context for Le Corbusier's urban projects such as *Ville Contemporaine* (1922) and *Plan Voisin* (1925) and will also, in all probability, be used by scholars aiming to reassess the ways he used space in the design of his villas. The book thus belongs with the most significant publications on Le Corbusier and early twentieth-century city planning that have been published in recent years.

Pulp Fictions and Interior Life:

Pulp Fictions: The Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing

Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi
Victoria University of Wellington
20 October – 21 December 2007

Review by Sarah Treadwell

Filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein wrote of the pleasure he felt in acquiring two Piranesi prints and, as he analyzed their internal turbulence, he also described them hanging on a yellow wall in his house; a strange relationship between the terrifying and the everyday (Eisenstein, 1977: 85). There is a similarly disturbing and illuminating conjunction in the two exhibitions held at the Adam Art Gallery at the end of 2007.

The surface evidence of the two exhibitions might suggest that they were disjunctive – that the work of an artist from the eighteenth century who etched new understandings of interiority and individualism, who was seen to make a world that would fly apart, might be at odds with a twenty-first-century delineator who works with hybrid constructions shaped by digital drafting and the everyday, with precision and gentle, sometimes comic, effects.

Filmmakers and architects have repeatedly evoked the spatial constructions of Piranesi, and it seems that every volume of architectural history refers to his astonishing and virtuoso prints. The Piranesi exhibition, *Pulp Fictions*, consisted of a fine selection of prints from four series: *Prima Parte di architetture e prospettivo* (nine of the twenty prints published in 1750); the *Grotteschi* (four prints from early 1760s to late 1770s); the *Carceri d'invenzione* (thirteen of sixteen prints from mid 1760s to early 1770s) and the *Vedute di Roma* (24 of 135 views of Rome from ca. 1748-1760). Lent for exhibition by the Alexander Turnbull Library, the prints were bequeathed by a New Zealand architect, Percy Watts Rule (1889-1953; Barton & Maskill, 2007: 3).

The exhibition by Andrew McLeod consisted of a commissioned drawing on three walls of a gallery executed over three days in October 2007 in chalk and white conté. The drawings were made, as it states in the catalogue, to "accompany an exhibition of Piranesi prints" (*Andrew McLeod*, 2007). Andrew McLeod's work accompanied Piranesi as a shadow, a companion, and a tracker. There are certain obvious connections between the exhibitions: both have a graphic linearity that is associated with architecture and both have a somewhat marginal relationship to architecture. On other occasions, McLeod has directly utilized the methods and matter of contemporary representation of architecture, the clean and seemingly neutral language of ArchiCAD, etc. McLeod uses computer software as Piranesi worked etchings, to imagine constructions for (and as a critique of) human occupancy of architecture: small figures and furniture balance on abstracted architectural constructions.[1]

1. Particularly his digital compositions in the 54321 Artists Projects, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, 2006.

Piranesi was a critical figure in the architectural debates of the eighteenth century, producing what writer Jennifer Müller calls "visual architectural treatises."[2] Utilitarian commentaries endlessly deploy Piranesi as an exemplar of the irrational, the cruel and the unstable even as they insist that he offers a legitimate account of passing history. Piranesi described himself as an architect but felt it necessary to draw the *Collegio* plan to demonstrate his propriety (Maskill, 2007: 33). Both McLeod and Piranesi seem to engage architecture from a peripheral position with an undecided relationship to the discipline of architecture.

Christina Barton and David Maskill, director and curator, named the Piranesi exhibition *Pulp Fictions…*, suggesting a sliding between genre in the two exhibitions as in the popular and disturbing film of that name directed by Quentin Tarantino (1994); a coalescing of comic drawing, violence and filmic movement. Pulp fiction is also a term for everyday reading, like Piranesi's tourist images shaped with knowledge of the market, for both public consumption and a mass audience. In his etchings of Rome, a recurrent carriage, drawn up on the periphery of the architecture, ornate and low slung, transports the tourist from site to site.

Pulp fiction is associated with graphic violence in both the paperbacks and film, and violence is evident in Piranesi's *Carceri* torture scenes and his grotesque remnants of sacrificial feasts. In the benign but black atmosphere of McLeod's drawings, tucked behind an angular (and testingly uncomfortable) chair, a small figure is pierced through with a side-line flag. The implicit and displaced violence in Tarantino's film, Piranesi's etchings and McLeod's drawings is associated with interior space, perspectival constructions and darkness.

The space of the exhibition mimics a descent into darkness. Piranesi's tour of Rome, his grotesque architectural fragments and the *Carceri* prints step in series down the cliff-like architecture of the Adam Art Gallery. Hanging on the ledges of the gallery, under strips of light, the engravings are displayed in an implicit and descending order. Full size, the *Carceri* seem disturbingly clear after years of viewing small reproductions. Bodies once indistinguishable from shadows are enlarged; the gaping mouth of a man entangled in ropes and chains (enlarged and stuck to the painted wall at entry level to the gallery) is precise, as is the pain of the man on the rack and the wretched postures of hunched figures rendered miniature in infinitely distorting space. The darkness that lodges in the cut lines of Piranesi's work, viewed as a series and at full size, is persistent.

The relentlessly black walls of the McLeod exhibition are matt and absorbent; blackness has leaked from the etched scorings of Piranesi to become an enveloping continuous surface that muffles and depresses. In Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, the prophet Ezekiel is (mis)quoted with a reference to the valley of darkness. Blackly interior, the McLeod drawings refigure the obsessive collections of childhood; the charming depictions seem apotropaic.

The exhibition of Andrew McLeod's work titled *Interior Life: A Wall Drawing*, performs as a series of compilations: animal, furniture, pictures, objects, food, plants, etc. A collection of (chalk drawn) paintings hang at suitable intervals around the gallery space. Beneath the 'paintings' are pieces of furniture – another collection – a Mackintosh chair, an Elizabethan table, a Captain's chair, a leather chesterfield, an Art Deco chair, an Egyptian couch smudged with human use.

Other orders, in fainter lines, infiltrate the room. Animals in abundance suggest that the black room is an ark with promises of both collective death and

2. See Jennifer Müller's essay in the catalogue, *Pulp Fictions* (2007: 4-6). The catalogue is a generous and beautifully produced document. It contains nine short essays from the Art History Honours students from Victoria University who, with the Adam Art Gallery, organized the exhibition. There is also a scholarly list of works (and a guiding hand for the project) provided by their lecturer, David Maskill.

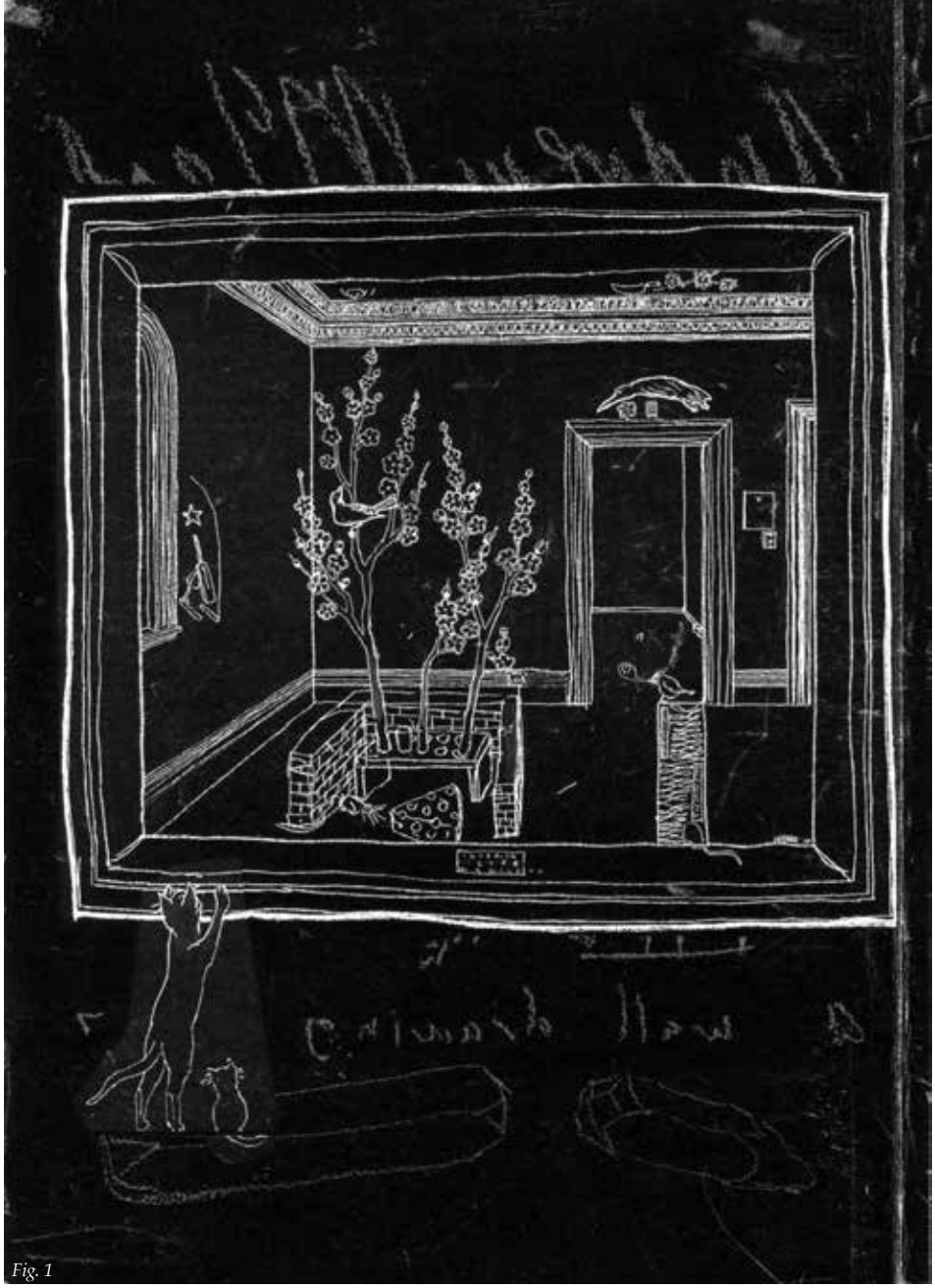


Fig. 1: Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing (detail).

Fig. 1

new beginnings (Fig. 1). In a reseeding of a post-global world, McLeod drew a cow, a monkey, a bird, a cat and kitten, a bear and elephant (eyeing ice-cream). He inscribed a cat and cheese, cat and acorn, monkey up tree with camera and whirligig, kangaroo, goat, animal stack consisting of donkey, dog, cat, rooster, rabbit and escaping butterfly and fly (an escape from an interiorizing meal of animals laid within other animals), snake, lion, squirrel, rodent tail and lovesick bird. The architectural orders of Piranesi, that were also remnants or signs of a natural order (Corinthian baskets sprouting acanthus leaves), are multiplied in McLeod's aberrant domestic.

Piranesi also drew small forms of life amidst an enlarged architecture including tiny beggars and tourists (skirts like domes), sheep herders and their sheep. Dogs scratch and stand around the figures who admire the scenes. In the catalogue essay "Take a Closer Look: The Human Drama in the *Vedute di Roma*", Georgia Morgan suggests that the figures operate to not only provide scale and to direct attention to the architecture but also to situate the architecture in both theatrical and historical time (Morgan, 2007: 25-27).

In the interiors of McLeod's drawings, animals prevail over humans; they occupy the interior space of the gallery and they are also often outside the framed images. Animals proliferate; one child appears in a picture carefully writing

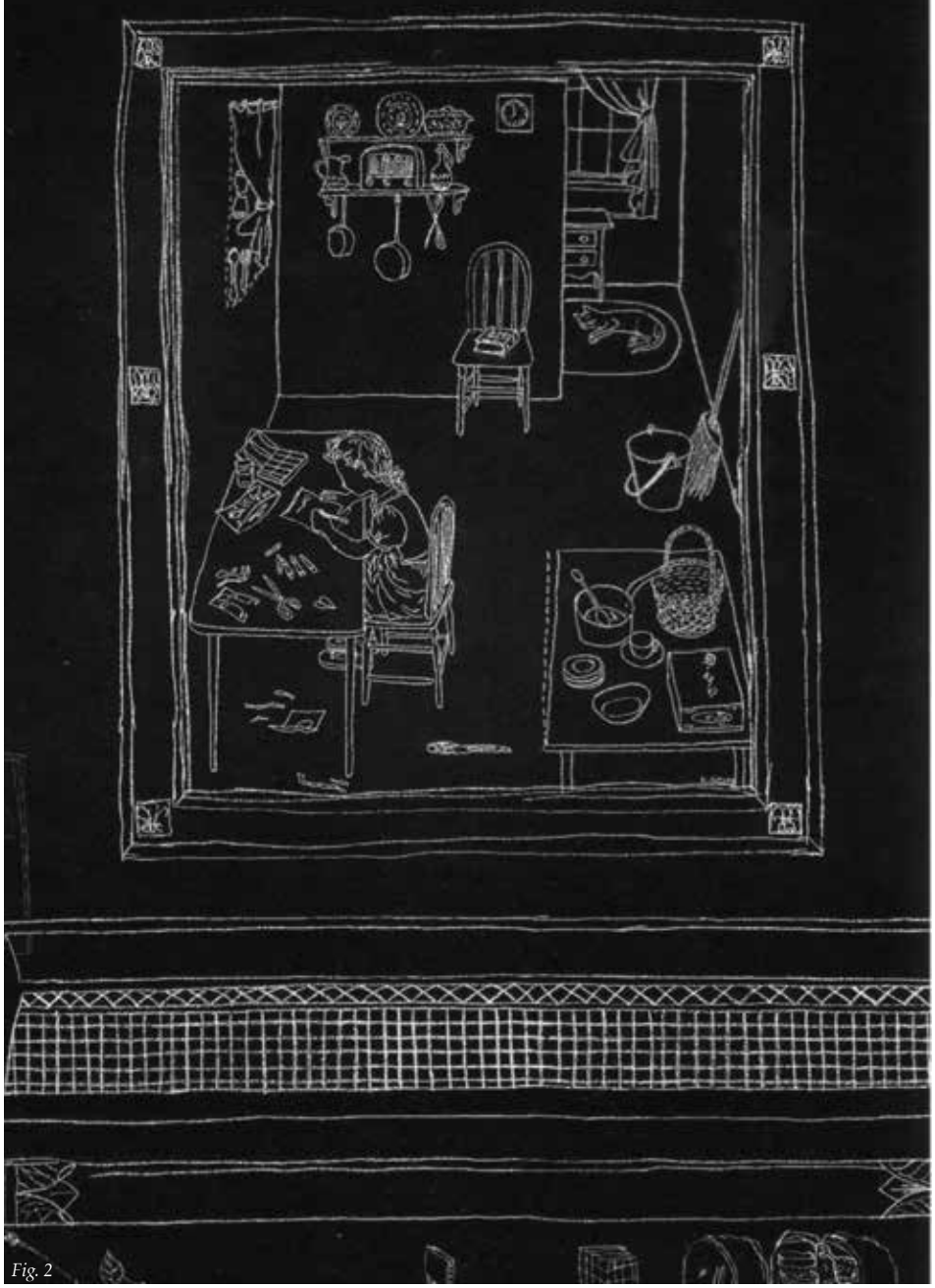


Fig. 2: Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing (detail).

with her left hand, distinguished by literacy but, in the vulnerability of youth, still animal (Fig. 2). Around the edges of the gallery, collected with the animals and trees is a flow of loosened household items: a tape-deck, a miniature refrigerator, frying pan with eggs, a prong, a bottle, a broom, a basket, a nail brush and soap, a heater, etc.

Piranesi also etches rivers of matter in a flow of time that, in the *Grotteschi*, strips the bones and tumbles temples, plants, architecture and bodies together. Piranesi records detritus over centuries while McLeod records everyday matter in the present. The bones and skulls of Piranesi are remnants of life without form – biological life, bodies from armies, from battles, from prisons. While the worlds of the two exhibitions seem remote, there is one explicit reference to a Piranesi print in McLeod's drawing.

In the *Carceri* print, "The Arch with a Shell Ornament" (*Pulp Fictions*, 2007: 33), there is a series of projecting steps that climb up the sides of an enormous arch. Introduced in the second state of the print, the steps, on which miniature figures seem to be stranded, offer a different scale to the work. Oversized in terms of human anatomy, they project into the centre of the image over dark and ominous machines. The space is gargantuan, convoluted, and the steps, without ornament or edging, seem to be structurally uncertain; abstract markers of ascension and the possibility of the fall.

Fig. 3: Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing (detail).

In Andrew McLeod's work a similar set of steps, without ornament or handrail, lies under a chesterfield, climbing from the floor (Fig. 3). Repeating the scale shifts of the prison, the couch has become the world to a miniature house, tree and chair. The chesterfield (encrusted with debris from everyday domestic rituals), beneath which the small world crouches, and from which the steps climb, is itself beneath a world beyond. Above the chesterfield is a framed scene inscribed on the gallery wall. It is a scene of marital nightmares: the double bed, which lodges in the warped perspectival space of the bedroom, is inhabited by one occupant who seems to be a small coffin with blankets drawn up to the 'head'.

The geometry of space in this scene is disturbing: it tends spatially towards one-point perspective, but planes slip and slide. Geometries are suggested and resisted – a rectangular trap door is poised over a dotted half circle and the sense of 'room' is barely held together by bed and fireplace. A small fire (or is it a plant?) breaks out beside the pillow and the bed itself is alight with a fire inserted into it; an outstretched figure is depicted amidst the flames. Drawers under the bed eject a cash register. On the floor beside the bed, a free-standing fire flowers and in the fireplace a third blaze consumes a hatchet.

The steps which reoccur in both exhibitions provide no escape for the tortured occupants: neither the bare life of Piranesi's inflicted inhabitants nor the occupants of the doubly interiorized domestic in McLeod's drawings. Bodies disciplined by mechanical and institutional apparatuses tell only tales of alienation and pain. In the surreal chalk drawings the shared steps are diminished and separated from architecture.

The slightness of life, the gentle, surreal nature of McLeod's world, when set against the monumental workings of statehood, seems salutary. The indefinite dark time of the Piranesi prints can be recognized in current representations of blindfolded prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, where life is reduced to a system of painful humiliations. In contrast, McLeod has drawn a

world in which the form of life is very present – removed from notions of a minimal, bare existence. He drew a world in which wild animals are domesticated (as they are in children's books, reproaches to categorical rigidity), but they are also inextricably part of everyday life. By putting these two exhibitions together, the director of the Adam Art Gallery and the curators of the exhibitions have demonstrated an optimism for life to be found in the imaginative openness of Andrew McLeod's architectural inventions and in a world shaped by the grandeur and pitiless projects of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

References

Andrew McLeod: Interior Life: A Wall Drawing (2007). Wellington: Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington.

Barton, C., & Maskill, D. (2007). Foreword and Acknowledgements. In *Pulp Fictions*, p. 3.

Eisenstein, S. (1977). Piranesi, or The Fluidity of Forms. In *Oppositions*, *11*(Winter). Trans. R. Reeder, p. 85.

Maskill, D. (2007). Pianta di ampio magnifico collegio, State iv/vii on double-page paper included in later Roman editions of the Opere varie. In *Pulp Fictions*, p. 33.

Morgan, G. (2007). Take a Closer Look: The Human Drama in the *Vedute di Roma*. In *Pulp Fictions*, pp. 25-27.

Müller, J. (2007). Self Portrait as an Antique Fragment: Piranesi's Artistic Identity. In *Pulp Fictions*, p. 33.

Pulp Fictions: The Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (2007). Wellington: Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington.

[arc/sec]:
Reactive Architecture

St. Paul St Gallery
AUT University
12 September – 4 October 2008

Review by Carl Douglas

> Above all we must remember that nothing that exists or comes into being, lasts or passes can be thought of as entirely isolated, entirely unadulterated. One thing is always permeated, accompanied, covered, or enveloped by another; it produces effects and endures them. And when so many things work through one another, where are we to find what governs and what serves, what leads the way and what follows? (Johann von Goethe, in Hensel & Menges, 2006: 16).

New Zealand is geographically a small and isolated place; it is difficult to arrive at, and requires effort to leave. Isolation has attained the status of a cultural myth here: the image of architecture standing alone against a sublime landscape has proved remarkably durable. Maybe there is also a certain isolationism at work in our enthusiastic adoption of the detached experience of suburbia.

[arc/sec], a recent exhibition of environmentally-responsive architectural systems at AUT's St. Paul St Gallery, is premised on the value of interconnectedness instead of isolation. As Goethe recognized, few things make sense in isolation. In his morphological studies, he concluded that natural form could only be understood in the context of the forces which have given it shape. To understand something, we need to understand how it engages with everything else. Aligning with this view, each of the projects in *[arc/sec]* is conceived as a response to contextual forces: social, cultural and especially natural. They are understood in terms of formation rather than form, morphogenesis rather than morphology.

The exhibition is unabashedly high-tech, with almost every exhibit hooked up to a fat bundle of cables of some kind. An array of digital tools (projectors, CNC machines, laser-cutters, servo-motors, scripted modelling and software interfaces) are employed. Uwe Rieger, the impetus behind *[arc/sec]*, writes in his introduction to the catalogue (a basic document, but well-illustrated) that these tools have "redefined" not only the range of forms available for architecture, but its fabrication, its flexibility, sensitivity and capacity for communication as well. The intent is a long way from arbitrary blobbery, the exuberant and entertaining but ultimately expensive and unrewarding play of complex forms permitted by digital modelling. Blobs are now entirely unremarkable, if not yet ubiquitous in the built environment. In *[arc/sec]* digital tools are used to explore materiality and environmental processes, not simply experiment with form.

Many of the projects in this exhibition are in fact entirely agnostic regarding form. *arch[id]*, a project by Barrington Gohns, Fraser Horton, Julian Legg and Rayneil Singh (fourth-year students at The University of Auckland) hangs overhead like


Fig. 1

Fig.1: arch[id].
Photograph by Carl Douglas.

a skeletal reef glowing red in the darkened gallery (Fig. 1). Made from a kit of laser-cut perspex parts assembled into a flexible frame using Penrose tiling, the shape of the surface could be arbitrarily extended and is capable of flexing into a wide range of doubly-curved geometries. Mounted in this frame are pneumatic brushes which splay out and retract in delayed response to movement detected by an array of sensors. When a group of brushes burst into flower, the whole structure shudders momentarily, recalling similar installations by Philip Beesley (his *Hylozoic Soil*, similar in materiality and operation, has tendrils that coil and uncoil in response to the passage of observers).[1] Trailing from the back of the structure are tubes, like so many intravenous drips, connecting to a compressor hidden somewhere in the ceiling. The catalogue outlines one potential use of this technology as a "light modulating facade" for a residential tower at North Head (a large-scale gesture somewhat at odds with the fragile filigree structure on display in the gallery) (*[arc/sec]*, 2008: 22).

1. Hylozoic Soil (Montreal, 2007) can be seen at http://www.philipbeesley architect.com/ along with other examples of Beesley's intriguing work.

archi[id] seems to be closely modelled on *WideShut*, by XTH-berlin with Jannes Wurps and Kai Bergmann. Here too an extensible system of lightweight components acts as a dynamic filter and screen which responds to variations in light. Each module is an umbrella driven by a servo-motor connected to a light sensor. The umbrellas, onto each of which is projected an image of a daisy, wilt and retract when the light is interrupted and bloom again when the shadow has passed. There is a steampunk charm to the combination of the prim, even Victorian, parasol and the sci-fi control system. The phototropic screen was developed as a prototype for a low-energy skin, and in the catalogue it is shown providing an animated wrapping for an otherwise mundane laboratory building.

The socks-and-sandals sustainability of last century was dominated by the idea of minimizing environmental impact. Through ever-increasing efficiency it was hoped that eventually humans could exist without traces. This philosophy is coming under question. As environmental advocates McDonough and Braungart write, "Is our goal to starve ourselves? To deprive ourselves of our own culture, our own industries, our own presence on the planet, to aim for zero?" (2002: 90). Instead, in their book *Cradle to Cradle*, they call for rich and intelligent

Fig. 2: CitySail.
Photograph by Carl Douglas.

interactions with the environment, so that everything we produce or construct increases ecological and cultural richness. Could sustainability be re-imagined in terms of the delight of touch rather than the guilt of contamination?

Luka Hinse's *Carrera,* a slot-car track powered by gym cycles, could serve as a model for this kind of participation. The visible flow of energy from one place to another becomes a kind of haptic play. The body is directly engaged. In addition, the project starkly exposes the immeasurable irony of a society that displaces the exertions of travel into the parodic labour of the gym, fretting about energy-starvation while anxiously burning off an energy surplus.

The calculus of energy loss and gain is most explicitly addressed in *ZeroPlus*, "an international research initiative to design, build and monitor New Zealand's first Zero Energy House" (*[arc/sec]*, 2008: 24). *ZeroPlus* demonstrates that responsive architecture does not necessarily imply electronics and curvy surfaces. "We should not forget," says Rieger, "that dynamic reactive or sensitive architec-

ture has been around for thousands of years." (2008: 5) Vegetation is used as for climate control. The house, a simple box-and-deck arrangement enclosed by a light mesh outer envelope, is embedded in a massive hedge, which divides it into two residences, and acts as an environmental regulator.

CitySail, a collaboration between XTH-berlin and Duncan Lewis, is imagined as a slice of Auckland's leafy suburbs, reoriented as a vertical sail on the harbour (Fig. 2). Indebted to Richard Toy's view of Auckland as a water city, *CitySail* responds to the maritime climate by swivelling like a wind vane. Each apartment in *CitySail* has access to a sliver-shaped garden high above the water. As the self-stabilizing structure pivots, the garden is always kept sheltered from the wind. Like *ZeroPlus*, *CitySail* uses plant mass as a dynamic component; the vertically-stacked garden would change in appearance with the seasons.

A 1:25 investigation of this proposal occupies the centre of the main gallery. It is a wing-like assembly built by Rieger, Fraser Horton and Alexander Wright. The wing is a lightweight tensegrity structure; the tensile skin and the irregular network of hexagonal compression struts are mutually supporting. Counterbalanced by weights, the entire wing can be pivoted by hand, triggering changes in the imagery projected onto its surface.

ShippingLandscape also makes use of plants as living elements of construction. Another collaboration between XTH-berlin and Duncan Lewis, *ShippingLandscape* proposes a network of massive barges which gather and convey fresh water, using it to grow plants *en route*. The barges can be temporary supplements to coastal sites, or can become permanent parts of the landscape, catalysing changes of land-use. The *WideShut* system is used to mediate sunlight, and the layered construction accommodates dense masses of plant growth which envelop and protect a range of event, exhibition and hotel spaces. The principle is similar to Lewis' 1997 design for a summer house in Angers, France, where the bulk of the residence is vegetal (Baird, 2000: 232-33).

Cunningly-aligned projections allow the large model to be seen gliding through waterways, and pulling alongside the shore. The model is constructed of fine mesh, which allows the projections to work volumetrically; the materiality of the skin appears to shift as the projections play out the patterns of seasonal growth and temporal variation.

Projected images are everywhere in *[arc/sec]*. Moving through the gallery, there is always the glint of a ceiling-mounted projector hard at work. Rieger says we occupy an edge between the virtual and the real, writing that "Reactive Architecture integrates data as a new building material", and that there is a "fusion of digital media and physical reality" (2008: 5). This edge-condition, the flickering back and forth between the virtual and the real, seems to express a desire to dissolve the concrete presence of matter, to render material ephemeral, fleeting, even if only in the rarefied space of the gallery. Architecture in *[arc/sec]* is concerned with the permanence of impermanence. Architecture exists in time, as Rieger signals by evoking in the exhibition title the idea of an architecture measured by the second.

There is a sense of belatedness about the arrival of this exhibition. This form of experimental systems-based research has been commonplace in schools of architecture in Europe and the United States for some years now. Arguably the foremost amongst these is the Architectural Association in London, where the

Design Research Lab run by Michael Hensel and Achim Menges has served as a think-tank, generating a string of books and research projects.[2] Hensel (who was recently in this part of the world, speaking at *Critical Visions,* the 2008 conference of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects) is at pains to assert the absolute practicality of the systems under development. With Menges, he writes:

> While plan organisation, envelope form, and fittings and finishes may have become more varied, material and building systems are not being critically reviewed; they are still geared towards established types and mono-functionality, while uniformity prevails in the interior climate and condition zoning. Architecture thus remains 'Neufertised' – as does our social environment. (Hensel & Menges, 2006: 18)

In the AA DRL, emphasis is placed on the production of systems, tools and processes, rather than hypothetical acts of architectural virtuosity. The work is analytical and experimental. Virtual models and physical prototypes are used to empirically test ideas rather than represent them. Rather than treating universities as places to rehearse or simulate that ill-defined bogey, the 'real world', this form of work uses them as laboratories for speculation.

The work collected in *[arc/sec]* shares many of these premises. It is hoped that this exhibition marks an increased commitment to these areas of architectural research. There is good reason to believe they will flourish here: themes of ephemerality and contingency have a long history in New Zealand architectural discourse. Goethe's description of a world where everything is "permeated, accompanied, covered, or enveloped" perhaps has a particular resonance in our strange and rich ecosystem.

It is noteworthy that in spite of the undeniably high-tech bent of *[arc/sec]*, the exhibition makes reference to some of the most basic, even primitive forms of shelter: the nest, the hedge, the umbrella, the bird's wing, the shade of a tree. *[arc/sec]* reconnects to elemental reactive forms of architecture. Architecture, as *[arc/sec]* presents it, is not simply a cause or an effect, but an environmental participant: both catalyst and reactant, stage and performer.

2. The progress of this ongoing research can best be tracked by looking at the series of issues of *Architectural Design* which have been guest-edited by Hensel & Menges, two with Michael Weinstock (2004; 2006; 2008).

References

[arc/sec]: Reactive Architecture (2008). Auckland: St. Paul St Gallery.

Baird, I. (Ed.) (2000). *10 X 10*. New York: Phaidon.

Hensel, M. & Menges, A. (2006). Morpho-Ecologies. Towards an Inclusive Discourse on Heterogeneous Architectures. In M. Hensel & A. Menges (Eds.), *Morpho-Ecologies* (pp. 16-60). London: Architectural Association.

Hensel, M., & Menges, A. (2008). *Versatility and Vicissitude*. London: Wiley-Academy.

Hensel, M., Menges, A. & Weinstock, M. (2004). *Emergence: Morphogenetic Design Strategies*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy.

Hensel, M., Menges, A. & Weinstock, M. (2006). *Techniques and Technologies in Morphogenetic Design*. London: Wiley-Academy.

McDonough, W. & Braungart, M. (2002). *Cradle to Cradle.* New York: North Point Press.

Rieger, U. (2008). [arc/sec]: Architecture per Second. In *[arc/sec]*, pp. 4-5.

Jun Aoki Interview

Andrew Barrie

Jun Aoki is principal of Jun Aoki & Associates. After graduating with a Masters degree from Tokyo University in 1982, Aoki worked at Arata Isozaki & Associates before establishing his own Tokyo-based practice in 1991. His celebrated early projects include the Yusuikan swimming pool complex (1993) and the Fukushima Lagoon Museum (1997), which won the Architectural Institute of Japan Annual Award. Aoki is best known for innovative boutiques for Louis Vuitton and the recently completed Aomori Museum of Art (2007), a commission he won through a major international competition. Aoki's work has been the subject of an exhibition at Galley MA in Tokyo, and a number of monographs including *Complete Works Volume 1* (2004) and *Volume 2* (2007). Several volumes of his writings have been published.

Andrew Barrie interviewed Jun Aoki at the School of Architecture & Planning, The University of Auckland, on 31 March 2008.

AB [to the audience]: As a student, it always struck me that it wasn't necessarily very helpful to learn how to design a museum or a concert hall. What I needed to know was what to do next – how to use my time at university, how to get a job, how to establish myself as a young architect. It's often quite difficult to learn about the early days of the architects we're interested in. So, given that this is a seminar for students, we thought we'd talk to Aoki-san about his youth, and ask what advice he has for those starting out on their architecture careers.

AB [to Aoki]: When did you decide to become an architect? What influenced this decision? Any particular architects or buildings?

JA: When I was a high school student, I knew I couldn't work for an ordinary company, because I wanted to be creative and because I can't wake up at the same time every day. So, my first choice was to be a film director, and my other ideas were to be a novelist or a writer, or perhaps an architect. For me, directing films is very, very interesting because when I was a child I really liked to watch TV [laughs]. However, I didn't know how to become a director, so I had two options – novelist or architect. I thought that if I studied architecture then I'd have a route towards becoming an architect. So, for me, becoming an architect was easier, so that's the decision I made.

Anyway, in my family being an architect isn't so special, because my aunt and one of my father's best friends are architects. During my high school years I visited architects' studios several times, so I knew a little bit about what they do. For me it was very, very interesting, and it didn't look like work but like play.

What kind of education did you have at middle school and high school?

It was very typical for Japan. We start going to school from the age of six, and it's compulsory until children are twelve or thirteen years old. I was a very ordinary student. At that time, I very much liked art and I liked to paint.

Do you still have time to paint?

Actually, no! [laughs] Nowadays, I don't want to paint but to make models, even just very conceptual models. After I decided to become an architect, my approach to art changed. When I was a child, art was painting pictures, but now it's three-dimensional things. I prefer sculpture or installation art to paintings.

You went to Tokyo University. Perhaps Kiwis won't understand the significance of that. Tokyo University is Japan's number one university, and is extremely tough to get into. Schoolchildren spend years going to cram school and staying up late studying to get in. Did you go through this kind of process?

When I was in my last years of high school, my aunt told me I couldn't enter Tokyo University like my father – he had studied at Tokyo University. So, I suddenly decided to try for Tokyo University. At that time I didn't want to be an architect, so I applied to the literature department. My test for Japanese went ex-


Fig. 1


Fig. 2

Fig 1: Andrew Barrie and Jun Aoki in conversation in The University of Auckland's Design Theatre. From video by Josh Stewart.

Fig 2: The young Jun Aoki. Photograph courtesy of Jun Aoki.

tremely well. However, my test for mathematics went very, very badly – I scored zero [laughs]. The test takes about 90 minutes, but I couldn't understand the questions. So, I forgot about being a writer and decided to become an architect. After graduating from high school I decided to re-sit the entrance exam, and studied very, very hard for a year – we call it *ronin* [master-less warriors]. I spent this year attending a cram school to prepare for the test. Back when I was at high school I was in a band, and had no time to study.

What kind of band?

Rock. I'm now 51, but when I was at high school Led Zeppelin was the most famous and interesting band in the world, so I played guitar like Jimmy Page. I even had the hair [laughs]. Anyway, when I decided to apply for university I sold all my instruments and stopped playing. After I passed the entrance test, I bought a piano.

Do you still play?

No. It's too difficult to learn the piano…

Tell us about your time at university.

In Japan, Tokyo University is special because the undergraduate course is four years long. The first two years aren't specialized architectural training – it's exactly the same course for all the engineering disciplines.

This is the general course within the School of Engineering…

Yes. You then have to decide what specialization to do, and have just two further years of study. When I began the architecture program, I was very shocked by the *kadai* [studio project]. This involved some virtual project, for which the students had to prepare a proposal to meet the requirements. It was the first time I felt really enthusiastic about something. I didn't want to sleep or to eat, because I was having so much fun [laughs]. It was very, very interesting. I didn't want to go to university for structural courses or mechanical courses – just design. I knew very few of the professors – I never met them because I didn't go into the


Fig. 3


Fig. 4

Fig 3: Jun Aoki at Isozaki's atelier. Photograph courtesy of Jun Aoki.

Fig 4: Jun Aoki, Mamihara Bridge, Mamihara, Kumamoto, Japan, 1995. Photograph courtesy of The Japan Foundation.

university. I just made drawings and models, and one day a week I'd go to the university to show my ideas. That was my university experience.

Who were the professors of architecture at Tokyo University at that time?

When I began the architecture course, Yoshinobu Ashihara was a professor – he's a kind of father of Japanese modernism. Then Fumihiko Maki came to the university, so we learned from Maki-san and Ashihara-san. We also we had guest professors like Arata Isozaki, Kazuo Shinohara and other architects. Tokyo is a huge city, and 80 percent of Japan's architects live there, with only 20 percent living in Osaka – like Ando-san – or other areas. I think Tokyo is a very special city – at Tokyo University, lots of architects were invited to teach the students.

When those outside architects came into the School, how did they teach?

It was very, very interesting, as it was a kind of presentation of the architects themselves. I remember Shinohara-san's class – his *kadai* proposed that if you believe originality grows from the process of copying, what kind of architecture can you make? So, everybody had to make a copy, but in a very original way. It was very, very interesting – it wasn't so much teaching as a presentation of Shinohara-san's own philosophy about architecture.

How did you come to work for Isozaki-san?

I graduated the undergraduate program and entered the Masters course. After two years of Masters study, I entered the doctoral course. I wanted to be an architect but I had no work – nobody asked me to design anything. So, little by little, I concluded that I had to go to a real studio to learn to be an architect. So, I asked my university professor to find out the possibility of my entering Arata Isozaki's office. I met Isozaki-san, and he told me his office was then fully staffed, but he said, "If you want to wait to enter, that's OK, but I can't say whether or not you'll be successful." So, I had to wait three months or so, and one day he called me and I went to his office.

I should clarify for the Kiwis that 'entering' this kind of office in Japan is not a clear cut process. It's usually provisional, and not everyone makes the grade. But you obviously did…

I worked at Isozaki-san's office for about seven years, including several very interesting projects such as the Tokyo City Hall Competition. However, I wasn't such a good member of his staff. For example, if Isozaki-san thinks someone is the best member of his staff, then they'll work on international competitions – there are lots of competitions – but Isozaki-san asked me to design very small projects – very, very small [laughs], like private houses, the renovation of his own house, and the renovation of the office. But, it was very good for me because I learned from the contractors how architecture is built. Otherwise, a lot of the work in Isozaki-san's office is very, very big, so the staff don't know about the architectural details but just work on the planning and think about landscape or urbanism. But I started from the details – it was a great chance to learn about architecture.

How did you establish your own office?

After seven years working in Isozaki's office, I became independent. However, I had no idea of what kind of things I could do, but I was keen to do anything interesting. So, my first project was a study of office space – not design, but thinking about future working styles, and so on. My second job was thinking about virtual architecture. I worked for three years or so, and eventually I got my first project in Japan. It was Mamihara Bridge – a small bridge that was part of the Kumamoto Artpolis project.

As you were establishing yourself, did you feel you were moving with or against the general current of contemporary architecture?

I didn't care about my position. When I started my own work, rather than becoming a famous architect, I just wanted to make something interesting. So, I don't read architectural magazines at all. Of course, publishers send us copies of their magazines, but it takes me only about one minute to get through each magazine, and so I don't know much about architectural trends or architecture in general.

What was your relationship with other architects in your generation?

I think you all know about Tadao Ando and Toyo Ito. Ando-san and Ito-san are from the same generation. They're the same age – I think they are now about 67 years old. Sejima-san and I are the same age – we have almost the same birthday. My birthday is October 22nd 1956.

These students will all send you a birthday card…

Sejima-san's birthday is October 29th. When we were university students we'd celebrate our birthdays at the same party [laughs]. Anyway, there is a very large and important gap between Ito and Ando's generation and our generation. After the Second World War, Japan's cities had all been reduced to ashes by the bombing. Every architect needed to build new buildings and new cities from this *tabula rasa*. But by the 1980s or 90s Japan's modernization was complete, so when our generation started working almost every piece of land in Japan was built up. So we didn't want to make new designs, but to renovate something or to make something from our own private interests in architectural space. Ando-san and Ito-san feel some kind of responsibility towards Japan as a nation, but honestly speaking I don't feel much of this kind of responsibility.

What contact do you have with the other architects of your generation?

Well, my generation is Kazuyo Sejima, Kengo Kuma, Shigeru Ban, and a few others. We can really only meet outside Japan – in foreign cities like Zurich – at the presentations for competitions [laughs]. I think the last time I met Ban-san was in New York, and before that we met in Switzerland. We don't have so much contact in Japan.

You talked a little bit about magazines. Because we in New Zealand are so far from the rest of the world, we're very dependent on magazines to find out what's going on. But you suggested that maybe it's not so useful to look at magazines.

Of course, when you're a student it can help you. However, when you graduate from school, you have to have some originality – you have to find out what you want. So the information in magazines isn't so important. Well… this is definitely the case in Tokyo. If we compare Tokyo as a city with Osaka, everyone in Osaka is very attentive to information from all around the world – I'm often shocked by their knowledge of architecture. Of course, the important thing isn't to know the new architectural trends but the most interesting things in the world. If these things aren't architecture, that's OK – art is OK, I think, or something about chemistry or physics or biology – anything. Anything that you're very, very interested in is OK – these things become the seeds of your inspiration.

Do you have any advice for students who are just beginning to start their architectural studies?

Well… for me, the most interesting and most important training in architecture is a kind of testing. You need lots of discussion or comments on your projects, not only in terms of architecture but from other faculties or other people. If you receive lots of comments on your projects, you can analyze your situation and your natural tendencies in architecture. From this you can clarify the image of your own architecture – creating your own image is the most important thing.

What's your definition of a good architect?

A good architect has to provide some new translation of space or of material. Everybody has a common understanding of space or materials or … everything, really, and the role of a good architect is to change these preconceptions.

When you are looking for young graduates to join your staff, what kind of person do you look for?

My studio has from twelve to fifteen staff members, all very young. Each person can stay in the office for just four years, which makes it like a kind of university. So, it's a very, very young firm. About 100 people send us resumes or portfolios each year, and I meet several of those applicants to decide if they can enter the studio. The criteria aren't secret – it's very much the usual stuff. For me, I like students who will make almost the same things in the studio as they did when they were a student. Looking at the portfolios, sometimes not-so-smart guys use the same idea for every project. They have one idea, for example, in a house project, but for their museum they use the same idea, and their commercial market, the same idea, and so on. These students have only one idea, but it's very strong. I like them very much, because they are tough. If they were smarter, they'd change their minds and find a trendier architecture, but there's some reason why they can't move on, so I'm very curious about them. This is my only criteria.

Long Live the Modern:
New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984

Curated and designed by Bill McKay and Julia Gatley

Long Live the Modern was held at the Gus Fisher Gallery, The University of Auckland, from 17 October to 22 November 2008. It was curated in conjunction with the launch of the Julia Gatley-edited book of the same title, published by Auckland University Press. It coincided with *Constructing the Modern City: Canterbury Architecture, 1940-1970*, curated by Ian Lochhead and Jessica Halliday and held at Christchurch's COCA Gallery from 14 October to 2 November 2008. Both exhibitions celebrated New Zealand's modern architecture and encouraged increased heritage listing and registration of our modern buildings.

Henry Kulka exhibits provided by the Kulka Foundation. Photograph by Sam Hartnett.

Inside Gallery 1, the black wall explained the role of DOCOMOMO, the international working party for the DOcumentation and COnservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the MOdern MOvement. Photograph by Sam Hartnett.

Drawings from the Architecture Archive, The University of Auckland. Photograph by Sam Hartnett.

The banner sports the book cover. Photograph by Sam Hartnett.

Gallery 1 contained drawings, models, photographs and text focusing on eleven of the 180 buildings included in the book. Photograph by Sam Hartnett.

An example of one of the eleven 'stations': Vladimir Čačala's Blumenthal House, St Heliers, Auckland, 1958. New photograph by Simon Devitt; period photographs by Ted Mahieu / collection of Bill McKay; and model by Clio Kei-Yan Chiu. Photograph by Sam Hartnett.

Contributors to this issue

Dr David Beynon is a senior lecturer in architecture at Deakin University, Geelong, Australia. His research involves investigating architecture as a social and cultural practice. One strand of this research concerns contemporary migrant, diasporic and hybrid architectures. On this subject, he contributed "Melbourne's Third World-Looking Architecture" to Colin Long, Kate Shaw and Claire Merlo (Eds.), *Suburban Fantasies: Melbourne Unmasked* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005). The other strand involves an investigation into similar aspects in antiquity, in particular the links between fifth- to eighth-century Indian, Cambodian and Javanese temples. This is the subject of a current Australian Research Council Discovery Grant. David Beynon is also a registered architect and has spent time living and working as an expatriate in Singapore.

Tom Daniell is a New Zealand-born architect based in Kyoto, Japan. He holds a BArch from Victoria University of Wellington, an MEng from Kyoto University, and is currently an invited PhD candidate at RMIT, Melbourne. He runs his own architecture practice, and is on the design faculty of Seika University, a part-time lecturer at Kyoto University, and a Visiting Fellow at SIAL. His book, *After the Crash: Architecture in Post-Bubble Japan,* was published by Princeton Architectural Press in 2008.

Deane Simpson is an architect currently based in Basel, Switzerland. He was educated at The University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington, and at Columbia University in New York City where he gained a masters degree in architecture in 1997. Formerly an associate with Diller + Scofidio, he collaborated from 1997-2003 on projects including the ICA Boston, Eyebeam, Brasserie and JFK Travelogues. He is the recipient of a Fulbright scholarship, an SOM Foundation Fellowship, and research grants from the Holcim Foundation and the ETH TH-project. He has taught design and theory at the ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in Zurich since 2004. He is co-author of *Diller + Scofidio (+ Renfro): The Ciliary Function* (Milano: Skira, 2007). *simpson@arch.ethz.ch*

Michael Findlay is a Professional Practice Fellow at the Department of Design Studies, University of Otago, where he teaches in design history and 3D visualization. He was Curator of Social History at the Otago Settlers Museum between 1990 and 2001, following on from positions at the Auckland Museum in the Decorative Arts and Photographic collections. His interest in New Zealand expatriate modernist designers began with research for an index of New Zealand designers and craftspeople which was under development at the Auckland Museum. This has become focused in recent years on Amyas Douglas Connell (1901-80), a New Zealand-born partner in the inter-war British architectural practice of Connell, Ward & Lucas.

Dr Robin Skinner lectures at the School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington, in courses on research methods, architecture of the Pacific and architectural history. His research focuses upon issues relating to New Zealand.

Dr Ruth Watson has worked with cartographic ideas and imagery for over twenty years, from "Planetarium" at Artspace, Auckland, in 1989 to a 12-metre diameter map of the universe made for the Yale-Columbia Observatory at Mt. Stromlo, Australia, in 2005. Her work has been included in international Biennales including Sydney (1992) and Korea (1995), and surveys of New Zealand and Australian art including "Paradise Now: Contemporary Art from the Pacific" (Asia Society Gallery, New York, 2004). She studied in New Zealand (BFA 1984) and Australia (MVA 1999, PhD 2005), and has received many awards, including the international Ristow prize in the history of cartography. She returned to New Zealand in 2006 and teaches at the Elam School of Fine Arts at The University of Auckland. Her work is visible via http://www.tworooms.org.nz/artists/ruthwatson/

Justine Clark is editor of *Architecture Australia*. She has a BArch from The University of Auckland and an MArch from Victoria University of Wellington. In 1998 she was the National Library of New Zealand Research Fellow and during that year did much of the research for *Looking for the Local: Architecture and the New Zealand Modern* (Wellington: VUP, 2000), co-authored with Paul Walker. Resident in Melbourne since 1999, Justine is now a nationally recognized expert on contemporary Australian architecture, but has maintained an interest in the mid-century New Zealand material, publishing on it in *Fabrications* and elsewhere. In 2008 she was the international juror for the NZIA's Supreme Awards.

John Walsh is the managing editor of AGM Publishing, in which capacity he oversees the editorial direction of a portfolio of design magazines. He is also editor of *Architecture NZ* and *Houses NZ*. Working with photographer Patrick Reynolds, he wrote *New New Zealand Houses* (Auckland: Random House, 2007).

Assoc Prof Linda Tyler was appointed Director of the Centre for New Zealand Art Research and Discovery at The University of Auckland in 2006. Prior to this appointment, she was Curator of Pictorial Collections at the Hocken Library at the University of Otago for eight years. She now administers The University of Auckland Art Collection, facilitating exhibitions, loans and reproductions of its artworks. As Director of CNZARD, she also manages the programmes and exhibitions at the Gus Fisher Gallery, and digital and on-site exhibitions held in the General Library under the auspices of the Window project (www.window.auckland.ac.nz). Linda studied art history at the University of Canterbury, gaining her MA there with first class honours in 1986 with a thesis on the New Zealand work of the Austrian émigré architect Ernst Plischke.

Dr Gay Sweely earned her BA at Illinois Wesleyan University, MA at the University of Utah, PhD *ad eundem* Certificate of Proficiency at the University of Canterbury, and dual PhDs from the University of Melbourne in Art History and Architectural History. She is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, KY. She was Kentucky's Educator of the Year, higher education, for 2005-06, awarded by the Kentucky Art Education Association, and is President of the National Honor Society for Phi Kappa Phi, Chapter 122. Dr Sweely is interested in the architectural histories of Canterbury, New Zealand, and Victoria, Australia.

Rowan Steuart Fraser is a graduate student of architecture and languages at The University of Auckland. He is currently contemplating potential topics for his masters thesis: 'Aesthetics of Banality' or 'Suburban Seriality'. He intends to pursue further studies abroad, namely the Cities programme at the LSE and an MA in France. He is a member of Nexus Sustainability, doing sustainable things, events and conferences. *rowan.s.fraser@gmail.com*

Simon Devitt is a photographer of architecture based in Auckland. Simon works with some of New Zealand's foremost architects and regularly visits Australia, where he has a significant client base. His recent work has included such prestigious assignments as shooting the New Zealand war memorial in London; collaborating on the Colorbond 40th anniversary book for Bluescope steel in Australia; a two-week sojourn for various clients in China; and working with Dr Julia Gatley on the DOCOMOMO New Zealand book, *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008). Simon is currently working on a book about the Athfield House in Khandallah, Wellington.

Dr Julia Gatley lectures in the School of Architecture and Planning at The University of Auckland. She has degrees from Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Melbourne, and previously worked at the University of Tasmania and as a New Zealand Historic Places Trust conservation advisor. Julia is DOCOMOMO New Zealand's secretary and registers coordinator. Her edited book, *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture, 1904-1984*, was published by Auckland University Press in 2008.

Dr Andrew Barrie is an Auckland-based practitioner and lecturer on contemporary Japanese architecture at The University of Auckland and UNITEC. After completing doctoral studies at Tokyo University in 2002, he spent several years working at Toyo Ito & Associates. Since returning to New Zealand, he has worked at Cheshire Architects in Auckland, and is a regular contributor to architecture and design journals. He has authored two books on the work of Toyo Ito, and in 2007 established Pecha Kucha Nights in New Zealand.

Dr Tanja Poppelreuter is an art historian from Germany. After finishing her doctoral studies at Frankfurt University, Tanja lived in Japan before moving to Auckland two years ago. She has taught art history in Germany and has also worked at several museums in Germany and New York. Her doctoral thesis, *Das Neue Bauen fuer den Neuen Menschen* (The New Building for the New Man) deals with early 1920s architecture in Europe and was published by Georg Olms Verlag in 2007. Her principal research interests lie in the field of architectural theory and focus on the impact of politics, sociology and psychology on architectural planning.

Dr Sarah Treadwell is Deputy Head of the professional architecture programmes at the School of Architecture and Planning at The University of Auckland. She teaches in architectural design studios and lectures on issues of architectural representation. Her research involves writing and making images of architecture in the South Pacific and New Zealand. She also writes on contemporary fine art practices that reference architecture.

Carl Douglas is a lecturer in Spatial Design at the School of Art and Design, AUT University, where he teaches spatial theory and leads Unit 2, a speculative studio concerned with the intersections of architecture, interior, landscape, infrastructure and urbanism. Recent research has addressed the Parisian barricades of the nineteenth century; theorized lateness; and explored the spatiality of archaeological sites. Carl is also a member of the Emergent Geometries experimental practice group. *carl.douglas@aut.ac.nz*

Bill McKay is a practitioner, academic and well-known critic of New Zealand architecture. A former Head of Interior Design at Unitec, he took up a full-time position in the School of Architecture and Planning at The University of Auckland in 2007. His research interests include contemporary architecture, New Zealand architecture, Maori architecture and differing understandings of the space-time relationship within architecture. He is completing a PhD on the latter at the present time.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the support of a large number of individuals who have contributed to the realization and quality of *Interstices* 09, through a range of different mechanisms, including, but not limited to, the blind refereeing of papers. They are Mike Austin, Andrew Barrie, Eugenie Keefer Bell, Simone Brott, Nina Corsten, Tom Daniell, Jenny Dixon, Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul, Maria Ericksen, Michael Erlhoff, Helene Furján, Wendy Garvey, Michael Gunder, Errol Haarhoff, Lucille Holmes, Mark Jackson, Ross Jenner, Desna Jury, Bechir Kenzari, Andrew Leach, Mike Linzey, Stephen Loo, John Macarthur, Ann McEwan, Bill McKay, Antony Moulis, Sharman Pretty, Christoph Schnoor, Sarah Treadwell, Peter Wood and Stephen Wood. If we have inadvertently overlooked anyone, we apologize. Thanks also to the School of Architecture and Planning at The University of Auckland, the School of Art and Design at AUT University, Architectus: Bowes Clifford Thomson, ASC Architects, Cheshire Architects, JASMAX, Moller Architects, Pete Bossley Architects and *Architecture New Zealand* for the financial support and sponsorship that makes publication possible. And finally, a big thank you to all the contributors to *Interstices* 09.

Notes for contributors

Submission

The manuscript should be submitted in the form in which the author wishes the paper to appear. Preliminary consultation with the editors about the suitability of the article does not guarantee its publication. Authors are strongly encouraged to seek comments from colleagues before submitting a paper for publication.

To facilitate 'blind' reviewing, no references to the author/s, the institution, department or firm or any other form of identification may be included in the paper itself. Papers that include identification will not be reviewed. Author name and details must be supplied on a cover sheet (name of paper, contact details in full, and word length of paper). Manuscripts should be emailed, in Word, to the editors for consideration.

Referee process: All papers are read first by the editors, then sent to two referees ('blind' reviewers) who will return a referee report and make suggestions regarding suitability for publication, editing, reworking or development of the paper. The recommendations will be forwarded to the writers for reworking, with the expectation that the referees' comments are addressed, before the paper is accepted and edited for publication.

Final submission: When a paper is accepted for publication, the author(s) will be asked to forward it electronically with the following file name: *Interstices* (issue number)_author name_final.doc. The editors reserve the right to make amendments, alterations or deletions to articles without consulting the author(s), so long as such changes do not affect the substance of the article. Usually, the authors will be consulted about such changes. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to publish images or illustrations with their papers and will be asked to sign a declaration to that effect.

Abstract

Papers must be accompanied by a short abstract (100-150 words) on a separate page.

Length

Refereed papers should not exceed 5000 words (including title, main text and endnotes). Non-refereed full papers should not exceed 2500 and reviews should not exceed 1000 words. Longer papers are only accepted in special circumstances.

Biographical Note

Include a short bio-note of the author(s) on a separate page (50-100 words).

Format

Manuscripts should be 1.5-space throughout, A4, with 2.5 cm margins all around. Use standard fonts such as *Times* or *Arial* and format the text in 12pt. Please use only one empty space between sentences and do not use more than one consecutive tab for formatting. All titles and subtitles must be in Title Case (lower case, with Caps. for first word). Justify all text.

With a few exceptions, the *Interstices* format follows APA conventions as stipulated in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th edition, 2001). For reference see http://www.apastyle.org. Unlike APA, however, in-text citations should be formatted as follows: (Author, year: page numbers), i.e. (Rykwert, 2000: 78-9). See further details below.

Layout **tables** on a separate page, with as few lines as possible, and indicate the placing of the table in the text with a note [Insert Table 1 here]. Tables should be numbered in Arabic numerals with a clear identifying legend.

Use **endnotes,** not footnotes, in all manuscripts.

Graphics or images should be provided on good quality white paper and on separate sheets. Also send digital files, saved as JPG, in anticipated size and publishable quality (300dpi).

Abbreviations (and punctuation):

cf.	compare
e.g.	for example
etc.	and so forth
i.e.	that is
viz.	namely
vs.	versus

Quotations: Double quote marks around a quoted word, phrase, or sentence, as follows:

Heidegger would make this point very clear in two later essays, in which he introduces the "*primal* oneness" of the fourfold where "to be 'on earth' already means 'under the sky'" as a counter to a world in a process of planetary dissolution, in which "everything is washed together into the uniform distance-less-ness" (1954: 149), and "airplanes and radio sets are … among the things closest to us" (1975: 21).

Use single quotations marks for quotes within quotes.

If the quotation is 40 words or more it must be indented by 1 cm on both sides, without quotation marks around the whole quote. Quoted words inside the body of the 40 words are indicated in single quotation marks, e.g.

> The axonometric drawings of Sartoris can be considered ... the locus of a cognitive transcendence: in the finished perfection of the design, where geometry discloses its suprahistorical authority, the architect-theologian catches the 'philosophical and poetic matrix' of the new architecture in the mirror of the 'dreamt image', and anticipating the ends by the mastery of the means, prefigures a reality to come. (Reichlin, 1978: 91)

Note that if a word or group of words is omitted from the quotation then three stops are used with a space before and after (see above).

References: Type the sub-heading *References* at the top of a new page. References should be formatted as 'hanging indent' style. Do not use tabs. Set up 'hanging indent' by selecting 'Paragraph' in Format menu in Word. Be sure to reference every author and text cited in the body of the paper. Incomplete references will not be accepted. Authors are encouraged to use Endnote software (Version 6 or higher). Examples:

Book:
Leatherbarrow, D. (2000). *Uncommon Ground: Architecture and Topography.* Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press.

Translated Book:
Agamben, G. (2004). *The Open. Man and Animal* (K. Attell, Trans.). Stanford (Ca.): Stanford UP.

Edited Book:
Hawkins, G., & Muecke, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Culture and Waste: The Creation and Destruction of Value.* Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Corporate Author:
Ministry of Education, Te Tahuhu o te Matauranga (2000). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Chapter in Book:
Parry, B. (2002). Directions and Dead Ends in Postcolonial Studies. In D. T. Goldberg & A. Quayson (Eds.), *Relocating Postcolonialism* (pp. 66-82). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Article in Journal:
Leeuwen, T. A. P. v. (2001). Columns of Fire: The Undoing of Architecture. *Hunch* (4, Winter), 63-81.

Unpublished Paper:
Jackson, M. (2001). Radical Gestures. Auckland: Auckland University of Technology. Unpublished Paper.

Newspaper Article:
Hattersley, R. (2002, Friday August 30). The Silly Season. *Guardian*, p. 18.

Thesis:
Jenner, R. G. (2005). Building in the Air: Aspects of the Aerial Imagination in Modern Italian Architecture. Unpublished Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

On-line References:
Humanities Society of New Zealand/Te Whainga Aronui (HUMANZ) (2000b). *Knowledge, Innovation, and Creativity: Designing a Knowledge Society for a Small, Democratic Country.* Wellington: Ministry of Research Science and Technology. Retrieved November 23, 2001, from http://www.morst.govt.nz/publications/humanz/Humanz.htm

Frascari, M. (2000). A Light, Six-Sided, Paradoxical Fight. *Nexus Network Journal, 4*(2, Spring). Retrieved 22 February, 2001, from http://www.nexusjournal.com/Frascari_v4n2.html

For further examples of electronic sources, please consult the APA website at http://www.apastyle.org/elecsource.html

Subscription

Interstices: A Journal of Architecture and Related Arts is published annually at the School of Architecture and Planning, The University of Auckland, and the School of Art and Design, AUT University.

Make cheques payable to UniServices, The University of Auckland, *Interstices.* Post to: A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul, School of Art and Design, AUT University, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, New Zealand.

Purchase *Interstices* 9, as well as back issues, online at www.mercurysubs.co.nz/shop/Architecture/Interstices.html. *Interstices* 3, 4 and 6-8 are available ($32.95 NZD within New Zealand; $40 NZD internationally); *Interstices* 1, 2 and 5 are out of print.

architectus™

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HERE

Patrick Reynolds

architecturenz

THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

subscribe at: subs@agm.co.nz