

"... about as austere as a Dior gown ...": New Zealand architecture in the 1960s

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Peter Middleton's 1964 description of Hoogerburg Scott's Futuna Chapel (1958-1960) as being "about as austere as a Dior gown and as comforting as a hair shirt ... [but] at least it's a meaningful statement" points to a sense of complexity and contradiction present in the architecture of the 1960s. The decade which began with Futuna's completion, ends shortly after its recognition with an NZIA Gold Medal Award in 1968. The significance of the building weaves through the full length of the decade.

The 1960s opened with the first New Zealand television broadcast, and closed following the change to a decimal currency (1967), and the sinking of the *Wahine* in 1968. Internationally, this was a decade of anti-architecture, Woodstock, and political protest contextualised by the increasing nuclear tensions of the Cold War and the not unrelated excitement of the first lunar landing in 1969. For New Zealand architecture the decade was similarly framed, bracketed by Richard Toy's All Saint's Church, Ponsonby, Auckland (1959), and Price Adams, Dodds West Plaza, Auckland (1970-74), indebted to

the international influence of the 1955 Pirelli Building. Early in the decade Thatcher's St Paul's in Wellington came under threat of demolition, and, after a significant battle in the history of New Zealand's architectural heritage, the church was finally bought by the government in 1967. In 1963 visiting Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck gave lectures in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, the same year that the Architects Act first restricted the use of "architect" - and the year that Ernst Plischke left New Zealand's shores to take up a professorship in Vienna. By 1969 the NZIA had awarded Plischke an Honorary Fellowship.

The decade also provided a shift in the business of building with the establishment and development of housing developers such as Lockwood, and Neil Housing. Architecturally-designed houses were located in this context and included: John Goldwater's House, Grafton (1962), Henry Kulka's Krukziener House, Auckland (1962), Lillian Chrystall's Yock House Remuera, (1964), the beginnings of Ian Athfield's house in Khandallah (1966-) and Miles and Warren's 65

Cambridge Terrace (1968). Larger architectural projects also included a diverse range: King & Dawson's Freyburg Tepid Pool, Wellington, (1964), Peter Beaven's Lyttelton Road Tunnel Authority Building (1964), and Basil Spence's controversial Beehive (1964-82).

Explicit acknowledgement of Maori architecture is documented in the *NZIA Journal* and included articles by Rosenberg on "Some Aspects of Maori Housing" (1964) and Robinson on "Pre-European Building in Taranaki" (1963). Ngāti Whātua commissioned Sargent Smith & Partners to design the Ōrākei Māori Chapel (1967), and W T Royal was heralded as "[t]he first full-blooded Maori to qualify as an architect by examination" (1965). Planning for, and debate over, the possibility and location of a second school of architecture continued through the decade, with Victoria University and Christchurch as the main contenders. At Auckland University, the first PhD in architecture in New Zealand was successfully completed: John Dickson's 1967 "Urban environment for old people: the individual dwelling and the common meeting place."

Architectural education tapped into psychology and perception studies, and in 1969 Allan Wild was appointed to be the new Head of School for Architecture at Auckland University. By the end of the decade, colour photography had begun to creep into the pages of the *NZIA Journal*.