

The Ideal and the Real: interior linings in 1930s New Zealand homes

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ABSTRACT: The choices made by New Zealanders in terms of how they line the floors, walls and ceilings of their homes, both today and in the past, is driven by various influencing factors. These include economic factors such as supply and demand, changes in technology, societal norms, as well as the agency of people themselves, ranging from the manufacturer and supplier to the designer and homeowner. In 1930s' New Zealand, architectural and building publications aimed to influence consumer behavior in terms of the products and methods used to design, construct and decorate buildings. These magazines also played a pivotal role in both reflecting and shaping current societal ideals and the associated ideal homes, which are almost always the homes of the middle and upper classes. This paper takes a case study approach by looking at the first eleven issues of the *Home & Building* magazine between October/November 1936 and November 1939, extracting from these the construct of the ideal home interior and the types of interior linings that were advertised and used for this purpose in the homes that are presented. To investigate the extent to which these trends are reflected in the homes of real New Zealanders, a sample of Wellington building consents and historical interior photographs available through DigitalNZ are used.

Given the rich published history on New Zealand's architecture it is surprising that little has been written about their interiors,¹ including the decorative linings, furnishings, fittings and ornamentation used to transform the physical structure of a house into a home. Given the greater flexibility, scope of personal choice and the ease of fitting out and renovating interiors over exteriors, it is often these aspects of the home that were, and still are, the focus of homeowners to express their tastes, identity and social aspirations.² Linings fixed or applied to the floors (carpet,

linoleum, vinyl), walls (wallpaper, paint) and ceilings, are often the first components of the interior that are selected, both for new builds and existing home renovations, to form the background for the moveable items that are used to furnish and embellish rooms. Linings also represent the aspect of the interior that is changed less frequently.³ As such, conscious and often informed decisions are involved in their selection. The choice of linings is dependent on a complex web of influencing factors which includes what is available and affordable, the advice received from professionals, family and friends, and ideas extracted from a range of media sources. A

study by Leonard et al. of 41 Christchurch homeowners between 1996 and 2004, illustrated how the available popular and building trade print media "both reflect and shape taste and thus create normative images and ideals about what constitutes "home", stating that "the media therefore act to present the home in "ideal" terms."⁴ This is as true in the construction of the ideal New Zealand home in the contemporary context, as it was in the past.

This paper seeks expand our knowledge of decorative interior linings used during the 1930s in New Zealand homes, by looking at the visual and textual references to these within the pages of *Home & Building*, one of

¹Publications dedicated to New Zealand interiors include: Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home*; Petersen *New Zealanders at Home*; Brookes *At Home in New Zealand*; Cottrell *Furniture*; Leach *Kitchens*; Drummond & Drummond *At Home in New Zealand*.

² Noted by Brookes "A Sense of Place" p 3 and Leonard et al. "Presenting and Creating Home" p 97.

³ Brand *How Buildings Learn* pp 12-13 categorises linings as part of the "scenery" layer of a building, which is changed on average every 5 to 7 years. It is likely that in the real setting of the home these changes may occur less frequently.

⁴ Leonard et al. "Presenting and Creating Home" pp 98-99.

this country's first popular architectural magazines, and to compare the linings used in the "ideal" homes represented within its pages, to those used within "real" New Zealand homes based on a sample of photographs and building permits.

Methodology

A qualitative content analysis of the advertising, articles and images associated with interior lining products and styles was undertaken for the eleven issues of the *Home & Building* magazine published between October/November 1936 and November 1939. Close attention was also paid to explicit and implicit references to the broader economic and socio-cultural factors in play at the time and the stance of the editors, as both influenced the ideal homes that were communicated to the readers and the content that was included.

For the purposes of this paper, a small sample of homes of everyday New Zealanders was selected to provide an initial view of the linings and trends that were used in these. Twelve building permits issued in Wellington for the construction of domestic dwellings between 1937 and 1939, four for each year, were randomly selected from those that have

Date	Owner	Architect	Address	Est. Value	Type	Size (sq ft)	WCC Ref
Aug-37	C R Johnston Esq	Not stated	Moxham Avenue	£1,900	Two storey, 3 bedrooms	Not stated	00056-B16931
Sep-37	A E Tilley	Not stated	Northland Road	£1,478	Single storey, 3 bedrooms	1300	00056-B17042
Dec-37	Mr F Hourie Esq	A Garnett	Beatty Avenue, Karori	£900	Single storey, 3 bedrooms	Not stated	00056-B17320
Dec-37	J J Craig Esq	Not stated	Messines Road, Karori	£1,410	Single storey, 3 bedrooms	1570	00056-199-B17329
Apr-38	A D Bennett	Robin Hood	Stratmore Park, Miramar South	£1,250	Single storey, 3 bedrooms	Not stated	00056-B17985
May-38	Mr E A Bullinger	Not stated	Cashmere Avenue, Khandallah	£1,192	Single storey, 2 bedrooms	1200	00056-B17839
May-38	Mr G Natoli	J G Mulling	Trent Street, Island Bay	£1,337	Single storey, 3 bedrooms	1280	00056-B17893
Nov-38	A R & G H Craig	Dawson & King	Bengal Street, Khandallah	£1,900	Two storey, 2 bedrooms	1500	00056-B18489
Jan-39	H Burkett Esq	Not stated	Coates Street	£950	Single storey, 2 bedrooms	Not stated	00124-554-391
Apr-39	Mrs C Robertson	H A Algar	Darlington Road	£1,025	Single storey, 3 bedrooms	1100	00056-B19127
Jun-39	Mrs I B Buchholz	Edmund Anscombe & Associates	90 Oriental Parade	£5,022	Two storey, 4 bedrooms	1716	00056-B19392
Jun-39	Mrs Mary Coppock	A P Page	94 Tiber Street, Island Bay	£960	Single storey, 2 bedrooms	960	00056-229-19363

Table 1. Sample of 12 building permits for dwellings in Wellington between 1937 and 1939.

been digitised by the Wellington City Council Archive (Table 1). This represents a small fraction of the 945 building permits for new dwellings issued during this period, of which 258 are digitised. In the sample, four of the single storey homes were constructed under £1,025, with a further five constructed below £1,500. A couple of two-storey residences in

the sample were constructed below £2,000, with the two-storey four-bedroom (include a maid's room) home of Mrs IB Buchholz at 90 Oriental Parade, designed by Edmund Anscombe, constructed for just over £5,000, representing the upper-end of homes constructed during this period. Aside from the flat-roofed modernist home of Mrs

Date	Room	Location	Title	Reference
1930s	Drawing room/Lounge	Auckland District	Interior design of living-dining room in domestic dwelling	13-2206 (MOTAT)
1930s	Dining Room	Auckland District	Interior design of living-dining room in domestic dwelling	13-2263 (MOTAT)
1930s	Drawing room/Lounge	Auckland District	Interior design of living room in domestic dwelling	13-2159 (MOTAT)
1930s	Hall	Unknown (Wellington?)	No title	1/1-015757-F (Alexander Turnbull)
1930s	Kitchen	Hamilton District	Ellis & Burnand - kitchen interior	HCL_07365 (Hamilton City Libraries)
1930-1939	Dining room	Auckland District	Interiors	1370-U024-01 (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collection)
1932	Kitchen	Unknown (Wellington?)	Detail of a kitchen interior	1/1-015728-F (ATL)
c1937	Hall	Wellington	Interior of private home	C.002736 (Te Papa)
c1937	Dining Room	Unknown (Wellington?)	Interior of private home	C.002734 (Te Papa)
c1937	Drawing room/Lounge	Unknown (Wellington?)	Interior of private home	C.002737 (Te Papa)
1937-38	Dining Room/lounge	New Plymouth	Leech, Interior of House	SW1931-1940.10487 (Puke Ariki)
1938	Drawing room/Lounge	Easdale Street, Wellington	View of part of the Living room in the Sutch House	PAColl-5870-1-08 (Alexander Turnbull)
1938	Kitchen	Unknown (Wellington?)	Kitchen interior	1/1-015928-F (Alexander Turnbull)
c1938	Drawing Room	Unknown (Wellington?)	Three people in a drawing room	1/1-017566-F (Alexander Turnbull)
1939	Drawing room/Lounge	Auckland District	House Interior - living room	1370-U024-04
1939	Kitchen	Totara Park, Manurewa	No title	Footprints 03184 (Auckland Council Libraries)

A shortcoming of the specifications and plans submitted with building permits is that these mostly do not describe the patterns, textures or colours of linings. This is why a sample of photographs showing domestic interiors of the 1930s from around New Zealand was selected from those available through DigitalNZ. While the black and white photographs of the time do not provide us with information on the product types and colours of linings, patterns and textures are discernible as are the ways in which linings were combined. Several searches were undertaken for images, filtering by the 1930s.⁵ A total of 1,715 images matched these terms.⁶ Only photographs that could be securely dated to the 1930s, especially the latter half of the decade, and those which showed interiors of actual homes (rather than advertising or commercial premises) were selected. The sample consists of 16 photographs. Table 2 provides details of these.

A shortcoming of using historic photographs is that these do not allow us to firmly date

⁵ Search terms used: "interior(s)," "bathroom," "kitchen," "laundry," "dining room," "living room," "drawing room," "bedroom" and "parlour."

⁶ Some of these represent duplicates, based on the same term appearing in one image.

Table 2. Sample of 16 photographs of New Zealand domestic interiors dating to the 1930s.

Bucholz and the Art Deco style home of Mr Hourie Esq, the exteriors of the remaining homes ranged widely, from unique

architecturally designed homes to more simple potentially builder design houses.

when a lining was installed, unless the description accompanying the images states the interior is of a new or recently decorated home. However, historic photographs provide us with one of the best visual insights into past New Zealand homes, and are the source most frequently used by historians and architectural historians.⁷

To expand on this research, and to add information on the manufacturers of linings, the products available and used at a certain time, and their materiality (composition, textures, colours, patterns), samples of linings contained in public and private collections in New Zealand,⁸ and physical evidence of linings in standing, or formally standing, homes can be used.⁹ It is these avenues of

⁷ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home*; Petersen *New Zealanders at Home*; Brookes *At Home in New Zealand*.

⁸ New Zealand collections of interior linings include Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga's (HNZPT) wallpaper collection, Te Papa's collection of wallpaper and linoleum, the Martin Hill Collection of wallpaper, linoleum and building material samples held by the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), MTG Hawkes Bay collection of Art Deco wallpapers, and wallpaper samples extracted from Nairn's cottage held by the Museum of Wellington.

⁹ This includes HNZPT properties, other public or privately-owned historic homes, and pre-1900 homes investigated and recorded by archaeologists prior to

enquiry that I will also be using for my doctoral research on decorative interior linings of the Victorian and Edwardian period (1837-1914) in New Zealand.

Home & Building: Background, mission and readership

A magazine devoted to the interests of all who love homes and gardens or who are interested in architecture and buildings.¹⁰

The first issue of what was to become *Home & Building*, was published with the title *Building Today* in October/November 1936 under the auspices of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Institutes of Architects (NZIA). After renaming the magazine to *Home and Building To-day* in the second issue, the name *Home & Building* was adopted by November 1937, when this became the national magazine of the NZIA. *Home & Building* was the only periodical devoted to the regular publishing of New Zealand architecture until the late 1950s,¹¹ and is considered by Clark and Walker as one of the first notable publications

their demolition as part of the statutory archaeological authority process administered by HNZPT.

¹⁰ Purpose of the *Home and Building* magazine from the first issue.

¹¹ Clark & Walker "Book, House, Home" p 208.

on architecture in this country,¹² which sought to bridge the gap between the architectural profession and popular discourse, between "those who thought about houses [architects] and those who thought of homes [owners]."¹³

The content of the magazine is highly visual, providing advertising and photographs of newly constructed or renovated buildings alongside articles describing these and the products used, techniques and materials for home improvements, as well as topical architectural and broader issues selected by the editors. While a large proportion of the homes illustrated are the stylish homes of the more well-to-do,¹⁴ more modest homes are also presented to extend the appeal, in the words of the editors, to "all sections of the community"¹⁵ and to "make good design practical for those that are not wealthy."¹⁶

The aim of the magazine was to place the work of architects and the value of this in the public realm during a time when architects were struggling to get private contracts, as

¹² Clark & Walker *Looking for the Local* p 12.

¹³ Clark & Walker "Book, House, Home" p 208.

¹⁴ Brookes & Shaw "Constructing Homes" p 203.

¹⁵ "[untitled]" p 3.

¹⁶ Beatson & Crookes "Editorial [February 1939]" p 7.

most homes were designed by builders.¹⁷ The focus was on promoting and portraying modern architecture, with content curated to reflect this by the first editors Ronald Beatson and C Irwin Crookes, both modernist architects.¹⁸ To spread this mission to a wide and diverse readership (and to keep the advertisers happy) the magazine was initially distributed free of charge through the local NZIA branches and was provided for the reading and waiting rooms in libraries, doctors' practices, accountant offices and dentists. While the magazine could also be purchased from newsagents for a reasonable price, very few issues of the magazine were distributed by this means.¹⁹ It is therefore likely that homeowners across the country, and from a variety of backgrounds, will have flipped through the pages of *Home & Building* between 1936 and 1939 to gather ideas of the designs and types of products and items to use for the construction or renovation of their home.

¹⁷ Shaw & Brookes "Constructing Homes" p 201.

¹⁸ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p 77; Clark & Walker *Looking for the Local* pp 14-16.

¹⁹ In 1941, only 400 of the total 10,000 copies of the magazine were sold through news agents, and there were only 60 subscribers, Brookes & Shaw "Constructing Homes" p 201.

Home & Building: shaping the ideal home

Before considering the different lining products that were used within the homes in *Home & Building*, it is important to briefly describe the architectural and lifestyle ethos propounded by the magazine, as this will have had an effect on the homes selected for the magazine, as well as reflecting the design and lifestyle influence promoted to its readers.

Terms such as "plain," "simplicity," "minimalist" and "modern" are frequently used to describe the virtues of individual products, such as plain carpets, drapes and painted walls,²⁰ and uncluttered interior spaces.²¹ These are the hallmarks of the architectural styles of the time referred to as modernist and modernistic (Art Deco).²² There was a clear desire to distance oneself from the old homes of the settlers by transforming these through renovations, or to build new and modern homes.²³ In terms of interior design, there was a call for a cohesive interior

²⁰ Beatson "A Charming New Home at Auckland" p 15; Gosset "Make way for Modern" p 37.

²¹ "A Portfolio of Modern New Zealand Homes" p 24; Beatson & Crookes "Editorial" [February 1939] p 7; "A house on a hill" p 16.

²² Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* pp 75-87.

²³ Beatson & Crookes "Editorial [January 1937]" p 7; "A Modernised homestead" p 31.

design approach throughout all rooms of the home, and for these to reflect and harmonise with the home's exterior appearance and style.²⁴ Advertisements for the home furnishing sections in department stores frequently include the word "harmony" with reference to furnishings.²⁵

These shifts in architecture that were occurring in New Zealand, are also reflected in an express desire within the magazine for a more informal way of life, through comments such as "we are not severe and formal people these days, nor should our living rooms suggest this,"²⁶ and living rooms "built not as showy fitments, but to meet the actual requirements of living."²⁷ Comfort in the fittings and furnishings of the home became increasingly important through statements such as "Always furnish for comfort, both physical and artistic, and you can never be disappointed in the results."²⁸

Coupled with a less formal lifestyle and

²⁴ Tecta "Orderliness" p 34.

²⁵ Milne & Choyce Ltd "Backgrounds for Modern Living" p 22; Andrews & Clark "Striking the Notes" p 37.

²⁶ "Evolution or Revolution" p 43.

²⁷ "Cintra" p 19.

²⁸ Tecta "Orderliness" p 34.

reflecting the declining presence of domestic servants within the home,²⁹ emphasis was placed on homes to be more practical, convenient and hygienic through comments such as "there is a growing demand for comfort and efficiency, a sure sign that we are definitely moving forward in the science of living."³⁰ This is reflected in statements extolling the convenience of open plan living,³¹ the promotion of labour saving domestic appliances,³² and the use of new "vermin and dust proof linings,"³³ such as plaster board, that largely replaced the use of sarking and scrim in homes during the 1920s and '30s.³⁴

Aligned with a break in traditional and more structured approaches to architectural design, the magazine encourages its readers to exert

²⁹ "Cintra" p 19 states the "servant problem is just one reason for cleaner and more efficient homes." Between 1936 and 1945 domestic service disappeared in New Zealand, in line with trends occurring elsewhere in the Western world, Macdonald "Strangers at the Hearth" p 56.

³⁰ Beatson & Crookes "Editorial [November 1937]" p 7.

³¹ Combined living and dining rooms became a feature of interior planning, such as for the Garden Flats in Mission Bay, "Garden Court" p 22.

³² "Esse Ltd "Better Cooking!" p 14.

³³ Beatson & Crookes "Editorial [January 1937]" p 7.

³⁴ Ashford *The Bungalow in New Zealand* p 72.

the requirements for their home with the designer, and to express their identity through its design and furnishing. An editorial on the role of the architect in design mentions that "different people need what serves the purpose of their different modes of life."³⁵ Advertisements for the home furnishing sections of department stores, and wallpaper and paint supplier Guthrie Bowron, promote their services to clients by encouraging them to express their identity and originality in their homes.³⁶ The role of women in this process is acknowledged through several articles by columnist Helen M Gossett which provide tips on home renovations, and in advertisements for kitchen and laundry appliances referring to women's demands for modern appliances,³⁷ and those for home furnishing departments, that depict or mention women as the home makers and deciders.³⁸

³⁵ Beatson & Crookes "Editorial [February 1939]" p 7.

³⁶ Guthrie Bowron & Co Ltd "Life's a matter of environment" p 35; Milne & Choyce Ltd "Backgrounds for Modern Living" p 22; Ballantynes "Let your originality reflect" p 4.

³⁷ Champion Ltd "Champion de luxe" p 4; L T Hayman Ltd. "Please the Ladies p 28.

³⁸ Andrews & Clark "Furnishings" p 29.

Interior linings of ideal homes in *Home & Building*

The interior linings of the show homes that are depicted and described in *Home & Building*, largely reflect the architectural and lifestyle ethos promoted in the magazine. The clear editorial hand in the selection of these homes must be acknowledged as biasing the types of homes that are depicted, with most using what can be described as modern, simple, practical and/or hygienic linings for the floors, walls and ceilings. However, to fulfil the mission of appealing to a broad sector of society, a number of show homes using more traditional lining products and designs are also included.

Floor Linings

For the dining and living rooms, fitted "all over body carpets" appear more frequently in modernist and modern homes, and in the grander homes of the well-to-do,³⁹ promoted for their ability to make the room appear larger and to exude an "air of quiet comfort."⁴⁰ While vacuum cleaners, required to clean fixed carpets, were increasingly available in

³⁹ "American Colonial exterior" p 27; "A New Otakei home" p 25.

⁴⁰ "An interesting house on a sloping site" p 22; Tecta "Orderliness" p 34.

New Zealand in the 1930s, they were still a novelty and beyond the means of most.⁴¹ It is therefore not surprising that several homes still used a hard flooring material, such as polished wooden floorboards, parquet flooring, and cork tile,⁴² with ornamental rugs placed over these which could be taken outside and shaken. In terms of the colours and styles of both body carpets and rugs, there is a mix of plain colours in pastel shades, such as mushroom pink,⁴³ bolder colours, such as brown and green,⁴⁴ as well as highly pattern carpets in mottled, oriental or floral motifs.⁴⁵

For bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and high-use areas such as hallways, a wide range of floor coverings were used. These include softer flooring products such as rubber and linoleum, and harder products such as

⁴¹ There were 3,122 items associated with vacuum cleaner advertising in newspapers available through *PapersPast* between 1930 and 1939, compared with just 432 items between 1920 and 1929.

⁴² "The Lovely Home of Mr & Mrs K B Myers" p 11; ""Paragon"" p 3; "Berrisville Flats" pp 14-15.

⁴³ Tecta "Orderliness" p 34; ""Paragon"" p 11.

⁴⁴ "Mr & Mrs J S Fletcher's new home" p 9; Tecta "Orderliness" p 34; ""Paragon"" p 11.

⁴⁵ Champion Ltd "A modern kitchen serves a Champion" p 22; Pickmere "Sleep in Beauty" p 39.

terrazzo (a type of engineered stone) and tiles. All are described as modern, durable, hygienic, and most appear to be available in a range of colours and designs.⁴⁶ In terms of soft flooring, rubber flooring (available in sheets or tiles) was used in bathrooms of both flats⁴⁷ and private residences,⁴⁸ and in the higher-use entrances, staircases and landings of apartments, such as Wellington's Fountain Court and Auckland's Berrisville flats, due to its noise dampening qualities.⁴⁹ In terms of colours and patterns, references are frequently made to "green rubber flooring,"⁵⁰ with a black border applied around this in the home of Mr SEM Brown at Kohimarama Beach, and a golden brown shade at Berrisville Flats.⁵¹ Linoleum, despite being extolled for its "[reduced] expense and ease of maintenance,"⁵² was used in just two kitchens, in mottled black in a renovated kitchen and a mottled ivory, grey and red in the Woburn

⁴⁶ "No 1 Room" p 41; BPL "Colourful, Economical Floor Tiling" p 34.

⁴⁷ "Garden Court" p 22.

⁴⁸ ""Paragon"" p 13; "An Interesting Reconstruction" p 16, "A brick home" p 12.

⁴⁹ "Berrisville Flats" p 14; "Fountain Court" p 10.

⁵⁰ "For Sun and View" p 16.

⁵¹ "Another Modern Seaside Home" p 15; "Berrisville Flats" p 14.

⁵² BPL "Colourful, Economical Floor Tiling" p 34.

home of Mr and Mrs Ashford.⁵³ "Building Products Flexible Tiles" were advertised for use in bathrooms and kitchens, and appear to be a soft and durable flooring material, potentially containing asbestos.⁵⁴ In terms of harder floor finishes, glazed tiles and terrazzo were also used for bathroom floors in several homes and apartments.⁵⁵ A product called "Eternit(e) Granite" was advertised by Auckland based company MC Stapleton & Co and Hopkirk Timbers Ltd as a modern, indestructible and hygienic material for bathrooms that could be toned to suit different colour schemes.⁵⁶ This product was produced by Atlas Asbestos, based in Canada.⁵⁷ Quarry stone (presumably natural stone) was the only other floor lining that was encountered in one show home, being used in

⁵³ Gosset "Just a little beauty treatment" p 35, ""Paragon"" p 11.

⁵⁴ Building Products Limited also manufactured "Insul-tiles," a product that has the visual characteristics of asbestos, *MacLean Building Catalogue* p 7.

⁵⁵ "Cintra" p 20; "Mr & Mrs J S Fletcher's New Home" p 10; "The Lovely Home of Mr & Mrs K B Myers" p 12; "Berrisville Flats" p 14.

⁵⁶ Hopkirk Timbers Ltd "Eternit Granite [advertisement]" p 17.

⁵⁷ Atlas Asbestos Ltd "Atlas Asbestos is best [advertisement]" p 7.

the hallway of a house at Cheltenham Beach.⁵⁸

Wall Linings

The almost unanimous use of flat lining boards, such as plasterboard and fibrous plaster, in living and dining rooms, bedrooms and hallways by the 1930s, provided a flat and even canvas for the decoration of the walls in either paint or wallpaper. A large proportion of the show homes were painted, showing a preference for this simple and plain wall finish in line with modern architecture. In almost all instances, the colours that were chosen were either light pastel shades, predominantly in pink, blue, green and apricot,⁵⁹ or cream.⁶⁰ The reason given for the use of light coloured paints is that they increase the sense of space and provide a natural background for more colourful furnishings.⁶¹ While different colour schemes were selected for different rooms by some owners,⁶² others chose to carry the same colour scheme throughout the entire home; a

⁵⁸ "A Two-Faced House" p 31.

⁵⁹ "A French Colonial Home" p 9; "Another Modern Seaside Home" p 15; "Modernised Georgian" p 22.

⁶⁰ "An Interesting Home" p 22; "Another Modern Seaside Home" p 15.

⁶¹ Pickmere "Inside the Doors" p 45.

⁶² "For sun and view" p 16.

move applauded by the editors who stated "one would like to see a little less of the silly treatment of each room."⁶³ Wallpaper was depicted and mentioned less frequently, with these generally being plain, textured or arranged in horizontal bands of two different single coloured papers, a popular fashion of the time.⁶⁴ Only one home used an old style Regency patterned wallpaper.⁶⁵ Two unusual wall linings in living rooms were glazed parchment, occurring in just two homes, and a wallcovering similar to American oilcloth, a type of thin vinyl, for a kitchen renovation.⁶⁶

A variety of wall effects, other than the simple use of paint and wallpaper, were also mixed and matched. Timber panelling, a more traditional feature seen in bungalows,⁶⁷ makes an appearance in hallways, living and dining rooms, either for the entire wall or portions of this.⁶⁸ A timber effect was also achieved by using tinted or varnished plywood, either

⁶³ "A Pair of Modern Houses" p 10.

⁶⁴ "An Interesting Residence" p 9; "Residence of Mr Tingey Esq" p 37.

⁶⁵ "Paragon" p 9.

⁶⁶ "A French Colonial Home" pp 9, 11; Gosset "Just a Little Beauty Treatment" p 35.

⁶⁷ Ashford *The Bungalow in New Zealand* pp 58-59.

⁶⁸ "A Portfolio of Small Houses" p 26; "An English House" p 28.

with thin timber panels covering the joints between the sheets, or the joints were left exposed to produce a "modern panelled effect."⁶⁹ Tinted particle board was also used to this effect in two homes, one choosing this in the children's bedrooms as this will "stand up to all the hard knocks it is sure to get from the extremely energetic young gentlemen."⁷⁰ Insulation boards provided another medium through which to achieve the modern panelled effect, and included "Donnacona" or "Insul-board," the former being a wood pulp based product,⁷¹ with the latter potentially an asbestos fibre containing board manufactured by Building Products Limited.⁷² These boards were available in both a rough textured or smooth finish and could be used as-is, stained or painted.⁷³ A textured and stippled effect on walls was also achieved using stucco plaster, either applied to solid brick or concrete walls, or to wallboards. This was predominantly used for the interior walls of flats, such as the Cintra and Grafton Road Flats, most likely due to its ability to hide knocks and

⁶⁹ Beatson "A Charming New Home" p 14.

⁷⁰ Beatson "A Charming New Home" p 15.

⁷¹ Information from Donnacona board manufacturers pamphlet.

⁷² See footnote 54.

⁷³ RBL "Donnacona" p 2.

imperfections.⁷⁴ A unique feature of two homes was the use of mirror panelling, intended to increase the sense of space, above or surrounding the fireplace in the living room.⁷⁵

A variety of wall linings and finishes were used for kitchens, bathrooms and laundries, including plasterboard, compressed fibre or asbestos board and fibrous plaster board.⁷⁶ These were either finished in enamel paint,⁷⁷ vitrolite (coloured glass sheets),⁷⁸ or glass tiles, the latter in a variety of colours and combinations of these ranging from green, black, white, cream and golden buff.⁷⁹

Ceiling Linings

Compared to the floors and walls, relatively few images focussed on the finishing of ceilings, or provided textual references to these. For the most part, ceilings were kept relatively plain through the use of flat panels

⁷⁴ "Cintra" p 20; "Eighty-Seven: New Flats in Grafton Road" p 32.

⁷⁵ Pickmere "Inside the Doors" p 45; "Glassage" p 11.

⁷⁶ BETA "Hot-and-Cold" p 39.

⁷⁷ "Paragon" p 11; "Eighty-Seven: New Flats in Grafton Road" p 32.

⁷⁸ "An English House" p 28.

⁷⁹ "An Interesting Residence" p 8; "Another Modern Seaside Home" p 15; "House on a Hill" p 13.

in a range of materials, such as plaster and insulation board, with the joints either left exposed to achieve the modern panelled effect, plastered to achieve a flat ceiling, or with thin timber or plaster battens applied to provide a stronger relief.⁸⁰ While traditional villa and bungalow ceiling finishes, like pressed metal "Wunderlich" panels and moulded plaster ceilings and cornices by the Carrara Ceiling Company were advertised,⁸¹ only one example of the use of plaster embellishments was found.⁸² The virtues of plain and unadorned ceilings were extolled in an article by architect RR Phillips as contributing to a sense of "airness and clean suitability."⁸³

Interior linings in the "real homes" of New Zealanders

The sample of homes of everyday New Zealanders show some, but by no means all, of the interior lining trends depicted in *Home & Building*. While elements of the minimalist and modern approach were adopted, such as

⁸⁰ "Another Modern Seaside Home" p 15; "Residence on Sea Cliffs" p 12; "A New Otakei Home" p 25.

⁸¹ H C Clarke Ltd "Specialise in Permanent Roofing" p 42; G E Hunter Ltd "Enhance the Beauty" p 25.

⁸² "A Country House at Featherston" p 11.

⁸³ Phillips "Some Thoughts on Home Building" p 48.

plain painted walls, body carpets and even full mirrored walls, more traditional linings of the bungalow and villa period, such as body and frieze wallpapered walls and match-lined kitchens, laundries and bathrooms, predominated.

Floor Linings

Aside from the "Best British rubber with a pattern" specified for the floor of the hallway and landings in the grand home of Mrs IB Bucholz, the non-service rooms of all other homes within the sample of building permits were lined with tongue and groove floorboards. Given that the specifications frequently stated for these to be covered during construction and/or sanded and oiled upon completion, indicates that these were the exposed flooring finish. This was also the base finish for one hall and six dining or drawing rooms in the sample of photographs where the floor was visible, with loose rugs used for six of these rooms.⁸⁴ A central piece of patterned linoleum may be present in two

⁸⁴ Harvey. Interior of a private house (C.002734); Harvey. Interior of a private house (C.002736); Harvey. Interior of a private house (C.002737); Anon. Three people in a drawing room; Anon. Interior design (13-2206); Anon. Interior design (13-2263); Anon. Interior view; Leech, Interior of House; Ellis & Burnand - kitchen interior.

images of a dining and drawing room respectively, based on the smooth and slightly glossy appearance of the lining underneath the rug.⁸⁵ All over body carpets can be seen in only two images, with a light and plain coloured carpet used in the drawing room of the Sutch residence in Wellington, and a square patterned carpet with floral motifs used for a hallway which is being proudly vacuumed by its owner.⁸⁶

Sanded and polished tongue and groove flooring also predominates in the service rooms for almost all of the homes in the sample of building permits. Rubber flooring with a pattern is applied to the bathroom and/or separate toilet of only three homes, that of Mrs IB Bucholz, Mrs Johnston Esq and Mr and Mrs Craig, with a terrazzo floor in the shower of all but the latter. All three of these homes are in the upper brackets in terms of construction costs, potentially indicating the cost and associated status of this material. With regard to the kitchen, it is possible that linoleum or another type of applied flooring was added after the house was constructed, as this flooring finish is seen in two of the four

⁸⁵ Anon. Interior design (13-2206); Anon. Interior design (13-2263).

⁸⁶ Burt. Woman using a vacuum cleaner.

photographs of kitchens, with either a marble or square patterned effect.⁸⁷

Wall Linings

The trend for painted walls in living, dining and bedrooms propounded by *Home & Building* was only adopted in the sample of building permits by Mr Houri Esq for his Art Deco home, and for the master bedroom of Mr Johnston Esq residence in Moxham Avenue. The remainder of the living rooms, bedrooms and hallways were wallpapered, with cheaper wallpapers valued at 3 shillings per roll used in homes under £1,025, with 4 shilling rolls used in the living and dining rooms of some of these; and rolls valued above this specified in the remainder of the sample, with the most expensive wallpapers valued at 5 shillings specified for the homes of Mrs Bucholz and Mr Bullinger. Two of the homes, that of Mr Natoli and Mr Bullinger, also specified the use of a filling wallpaper with a different patterned frieze above this, being a trend popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but one which continued into the 1930s to a limited extent.⁸⁸ Half of the photographs showing living, dining and

⁸⁷ Burt. Kitchen interior; Gunson. Cat and kitchen.

⁸⁸ Arber *Thirtiestyle* p 5.

bedrooms also used wallpapers, only two had all over plain or textured papers,⁸⁹ with the remainder having floral and Asiatic patterned wallpaper, with two utilising the filling and frieze technique.⁹⁰ The remainder of the photographs of living rooms had light coloured painted walls, with one adopting the mirrored wall effect shown in *Home & Building* for the entire wall surrounding the fireplace of the living room.⁹¹ The two images of hallways had either polished timber panelling with plastered walls above, or painted hardboard and batten panelling.

A wider range of wall linings were used for the service rooms, with almost all being finished in enamel paint. Traditional vertical match-lining was used in the kitchens of only two homes in the sample of building permits,⁹² and appears in two of the photographs.⁹³ The remainder of the kitchens in the photographs and building permits were

⁸⁹ Harvey. Interior of a private house (C.002734); Harvey. Interior of a private house (C.002737).

⁹⁰ Anon. Interior design (13-2206); Anon. Interior design (13-2263); Anon. Interior design (13-2159); Leech, Interior of House.

⁹¹ Bergman. House interior.

⁹² Homes of Mr Houri Esq and Mrs Robertson.

⁹³ Ellis & Burnand - kitchen interior; Burt. Kitchen interior.

lined with a variety of enamelled hardboard, plywood or plaster-based panels, with an imitation tile hardboard of the "Cellotex" brand being used in AE Tilley's home to give the effect of the more expensive glazed tile walls for less. These types of wall finishes were also used within all of the bathrooms in the building permit sample, with AE Tilley and Mr Hourii opting for the panels with imitation tile effects, with applied white glazed tiles used around the bathtub by the former. Match lining was used for the walls of the laundries in all but two homes, with enamel painted hardboard or plaster board specified in the homes of Mrs Bucholz and Mr Bennett.

Ceiling Linings

The ceilings in all of the bedrooms, living and dining rooms in the sample of building permits were painted plain or textured plaster, fibrous or hard boards, with battens in timber or plaster specified for most to cover the joints between the sheets, referred to as board and batten ceilings. In four instances, additional specifications were given for a design in the centre of the ceiling formed out of battens and finished with or without additional decorative features. Insulation board was specified for the home of Mr and

Mrs Craig, with square patterns cut into this, replicating the modern panelled effect used for some of the homes in *Home & Building*. Of the eight ceilings that were visible in the non-service rooms in the photographs, six were board and batten, with only the modern drawing rooms of the Sutch residence and that with the mirrored wall being plain ceilings.⁹⁴

With regard to the service rooms, nine of the laundries had match-lined ceilings, either oiled or enamel painted, with the remainder being enamel painted plaster, insulation or hardboards. Only the ceiling of the kitchen of Mrs Robertson's home was match-lined, with the remainder being enamel painted plaster or hardboard. All of the bathroom ceilings were enamel painted plaster or hard boards. Only two ceilings were visible in the photographs of kitchens, with one being plain and the second board and batten.⁹⁵

Conclusion

This case study, investigating a slice of 1930s New Zealand domestic interior fashions

⁹⁴ View of part of the Living room; Bergman, W.C. House interior.

⁹⁵ Burt. Kitchen interior; Ellis & Burnand - kitchen interior.

between late 1936 and 1939, has provided some interesting insights into the types of decorative linings used within both the "ideal" homes in the *Home & Building* magazine and the "real" homes of New Zealanders from a small selection of building permits and photographs.

The architectural and lifestyle ethos that the magazine propounded, with an emphasis on modern design, informal living, practicality, hygiene, and individual choice and expression, is shown in the decorative linings of the show homes. Linings such as all over body carpets, rubber flooring, light pastel and plain colour walls, enamel paint for service rooms, the modern panelled effect of sheet linings, and the use of such design features as mirrored walls, are evidence of this. Some of these features were picked up by the owners of the sample of homes that were investigated, mainly by those with expensive or mid-range homes and who chose a more modern design, such as Mr Hourii Esq. Linings chosen included rubber flooring, enamel paint, mirrored walls and the use of modern panelling over match-lining in some of the kitchens. However, a large proportion of the homes in the sample, ranging from the elite residence of Mrs Bucholz to the lower cost

homes, also utilised more traditional and practical linings such as polished tongue and groove flooring, timber panelled hallways, match-lined laundries and wallpapered living, dining and bedrooms. These indicate more conservative attitudes towards interior design, confirming lloyd-Jenkins' view that the 1930s were a time of domestic restraint and conservative tastes,⁹⁶ which was no doubt a source of frustration to the editors of *Home & Building* and aspiring architects and designers.

⁹⁶ lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p 65.

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