

The Politics of Empire and the Architecture of Identity: Public Architecture in New Zealand 1900-1918

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ABSTRACT: During the period from 1900 to 1918 new governmental buildings were constructed throughout New Zealand as part of a campaign to provide accommodation for government departments. Post offices, court houses and departmental buildings appeared in provincial towns as well as in major cities, almost all products of the government's architectural office, led by John Campbell. The exuberant Imperial Baroque style adopted for these buildings reflects a new national confidence but also follows closely the precedent of British public building of the period. Auckland's former Chief Post Office (1908-11) for example, is closely modelled on Sir Henry Tanner's Central Post Office in London (1907).

The extent and consistency of the Government's building programme was intended to promote a sense of national unity although its dependence on British models seems to confirm Hurst Seager's argument that New Zealand had yet to develop a distinctive architectural style. The use of the Imperial Baroque style, culminating in Campbell's design for Parliament Buildings of 1911, reflected New Zealand's strong sense of identification with the British Empire, also expressed through the contributions of its politicians at Imperial Conferences from 1897 to 1911. Unlike their counterparts from Canada and Australia, New Zealand politicians argued for stronger imperial bonds as a way of ensuring greater influence over imperial policies. This paper will argue that in fact, New Zealand public architecture of the period 1900-18 reflects a clear sense of national identity but one that is defined in terms of Britishness and conceived within the larger framework of the security provided by imperial solidarity.

When Parliament Buildings in Wellington burned down in December 1907 its rebuilding provided New Zealand with a serendipitous opportunity to redefine the country's national image in architectural terms. If, in retrospect, the building, which has since established itself in national consciousness as the symbol of parliamentary democracy in New Zealand, seems to have little to say about the distinctive political, social and cultural character of this country, and perhaps even less about the unique traditions of building that have

emerged in these islands, it nevertheless remains an inescapable presence in the history of New Zealand architecture, and its particular character needs to be explained and understood.¹ What is more, Parliament Buildings (1912-22) represents the culmination of a programme of governmental building that had been going on for more than a decade, as the long depression of the 1880s and 1890s began to lift and as central government asserted its presence throughout the country during this period.²

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the competition that eventually produced the winning design of John Campbell, the Government Architect, and his assistant, Claude Paton, is the unusual degree of unanimity among competitors in their choice of style for the building.³ Gothic, which had provided the stylistic basis for the heterogeneous collection of structures by various architects which comprised the old parliamentary complex, was replaced by Edwardian Baroque, the architectural idiom

¹ Recognition of the country's indigenous architecture could only be found in the Maori Affairs Committee Room, which incorporated carvings in the manner of a *whare runanga* fixed to the end wall. See Martin *The House* p 158.

² Richardson "Building the Dominion" v 1, pp 261ff. See also Richardson "An Architecture of Empire." On the history of Parliament buildings in general see Cook *Parliament* and McKenzie "Victorian Gothic to Edwardian Baroque" pp 14-19 and most recently, Martin *The House*.

³ A selection of designs, including those by George Troup and William Gray Young, WH Gummer, Samuel Hurst Seager and the two entries of John Campbell, were published in *A Selection of Competitive Designs for Proposed New Parliamentary Buildings*.

which had risen to prominence for governmental buildings in Britain during the last decade of the nineteenth century.⁴ Derived from the classical monumental architecture which emerged in the British Isles in the last quarter of the seventeenth and the first decades of the eighteenth century, exemplified by Sir Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral in London (1675-1710), its ultimate origins can be traced to the early seventeenth-century architecture of Italy and the building programmes of a resurgent, post-Reformation Roman Catholic church, the architecture to which the term Baroque was first applied.⁵ By what curious process of transmutation could an architecture that had emerged in early seventeenth-century Italy as Classical, Catholic and Absolutist come to represent a South Pacific nation that conceived of itself, in the early years of the twentieth century, as democratic, egalitarian, Protestant and, above all else, British?

The first step in this process was the domestication of the Baroque as an English, and ultimately, a British architectural style. A key player in this gradual process was the first

⁴ The first four placed designs were all variants of the Edwardian Baroque; of these the first and fourth placed were by Campbell in association with members of his

great English architect of the Renaissance, Inigo Jones, who introduced an undiluted version of Renaissance classicism to England in a precocious series of villas beginning with the Queen's House at Greenwich (1618-35) and culminating with the Banqueting House on Whitehall for James I (1619-22). Jones' successors continued this Royal Building programme, most notably in the series of buildings for the Royal Naval Hospital at Greenwich during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. When Wren was employed to design the Chapel and Dining Hall at Greenwich (begun 1696) a distinctive English classical idiom was emerging in which the sophisticated adherence to classical rules that was exemplified by the work of Jones was given a new dynamism through increasing contact with the work of the great masters of the European Baroque, in particular the works of Bernini and Borromini. Wren was given a tantalising glimpse of Bernini's grand plan for the Louvre when the two architects met briefly in Paris in 1665, but a distinctly English approach to the Baroque was quick to emerge. On the one hand, Wren's Baroque drew from the example of his continental contemporaries,

staff, while the third placed design was by WH Gummer, who had recently returned from England where he had worked in the office of Lutyens.

but he tempered their extravagance with a quintessential English moderation. Wren's major secular commissions were either for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, or the Royal Naval and Royal Military Hospitals at Greenwich and Chelsea respectively. In comparison with the great Baroque palaces of continental Europe, his one Royal palace, at Hampton Court (1689-1701), is a modest addition to a late medieval manor house. Wren's most important commission, St Paul's Cathedral, took the domed, basilical church plan of Catholic Europe and turned it into a great Protestant cathedral for the emerging British nation.

Wren's assistants and followers, Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicolas Hawksmoor, represent the other side of the English Baroque, its romantic, and in the case of Hawksmoor, its Gothic character, revealing a quirkiness in the use of classical motifs and what could almost be described as a Shakespearean disregard for classical rules. Significantly, Vanbrugh's most important commission, Blenheim Palace (1705-24), was not a royal residence but was built as the nation's gift to the Duke of Marlborough,

⁵ The standard survey of the topic is Downes' *English Baroque Architecture*.

victor at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. It symbolised, among other things, British military prowess and superiority over its European rivals.

Coincidental with the emergence of what is generally referred to as the English Baroque, was the forging of the new British nation as a result of the Act of Union of 1707. No longer England, Wales and Scotland, but henceforward, Great Britain, the eighteenth century witnessed the rise of a militarily powerful, modern, commercial and increasingly industrial nation intent on retaining its Protestant independence while extending its influence through the arms of its navy and mercantile marine to the furthest ends of the earth.⁶ By the time of Wren's death in 1723 it could be said that the Catholic and absolutist associations of the Baroque had been greatly diminished, although not sufficiently for the Scottish architect, Colen Campbell, who, in 1715, was critical of Wren's Royal works in *Vitruvius Britannicus*, his monumental compilation of English architecture of the preceding century. The accession to the British throne of the German Elector of Hanover as

George I in 1714 marked a significant shift in British political life and, in architecture, a move away from the prevailing Baroque to a purer classicism inspired by the works of the sixteenth-century Venetian architect, Andrea Palladio and his English disciple, Inigo Jones.⁷ If the Palladian movement suppressed the Baroque tendencies of English eighteenth century architecture, it nevertheless asserted the claims of classicism to symbolise British liberty and the limitation of monarchical power through parliament. Significantly, Inigo Jones' unrealised designs for the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster were published in a lavish edition by the Palladian architect, William Kent, in 1727.⁸

The eventual destruction by fire of the disparate collection of buildings that constituted the Palace of Westminster in 1834 (an event that prefigured the destruction of New Zealand's parliament buildings 73 years later) came at exactly the wrong time for it to be rebuilt in any style other than Gothic, and Barry and Pugin's rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster was one of the pivotal events in the history of the Gothic Revival, transforming not only the architecture

of Victorian Britain but shaping the architectural character of colonial New Zealand as well.⁹ Governmental buildings in colonial New Zealand adapted both the Gothic and classical styles to local conditions but as the century advanced Gothic was increasingly supplanted by Renaissance classicism. In Britain, Gothic had reached its apogee by the 1870s and although the transition to the vigorous classical style which came to be known as the Wrenaissance was gradual rather than abrupt, by the last years of Victoria's reign the style, also known as Imperial Baroque, was well established. Its leading exponents included Norman Shaw, EW Mountford, John Belcher and Aston Webb, all of whom contributed to the reshaping of London into the capital of a vast empire that encompassed the globe.¹⁰ By the first decade of the twentieth century the Baroque had emerged as the architectural style of Empire, a style that was by now accepted as quintessentially British and appropriate for housing the state institutions that were seen as among the very foundations of Britain's position of international superiority. Buildings such as Mountford's Central Criminal Court, better known as the "Old

⁶ For a recent discussion of the shaping of British national identity following the 1707 Act of Union see Colley *Britons*.

⁷ See Summerson *Architecture in England* and Wittkower *Palladio and English Palladianism*.

⁸ Kent *Designs of Inigo Jones*.

⁹ See Port *The Houses of Parliament* and Dixon & Muthesius *Victorian Architecture*.

¹⁰ Port *Imperial London*.

Bailey" (1901-7) gave the style prominence in the capital while Sir Aston Webb's refacing of Buckingham Palace (1912-13) finally cemented the style's pre-eminent position for public buildings.¹¹

This rapid survey of the way in which Imperial Baroque evolved in Britain, both architecturally and symbolically, does not, in itself, explain the remarkably rapid acceptance of the style in New Zealand in the years immediately following 1900. The turn of the new century, the achievement of Dominion status in 1907, the demographic shift from a population of immigrants to one in which numerical superiority rested with the native born are among the factors regularly cited as reflecting a growing sense of national identity among Pākehā New Zealanders in the first decade of the century.¹² Samuel Hurst Seager's comments in the *RIBA Journal* of 1900 have been interpreted as a call for a greater expression of independence in New Zealand architecture and his own practice as an architect reveals a strong belief in the

importance of New Zealand's tradition of colonial buildings and the use of vernacular materials to shape a distinctive local architecture.¹³ Nevertheless, when it came to public buildings Seager was ready to adopt the Baroque or variants of it, as can be seen in his own competition design for Parliament Buildings.¹⁴ New Zealand architecture of this period seems, in fact, to be Janus faced, with public architecture looking back towards Britain while domestic architecture is more concerned with forging something local and new. In reality what we are seeing, I would argue, is not the mask of Janus but two parallel views of the future, a nation that is increasingly conscious of its own identity, but one that is also intent on becoming more British than the British, the New Zealand that James Belich describes as Better Britain.¹⁵

In the two decades prior to the turn of the twentieth century New Zealand made the painful transition from being an extractive economy fuelled by continuous emigration to a more stable economy in which population

growth steadied and emphasis shifted to the establishment of a sustainable economy based on agriculture. With the advent of refrigerated cargo shipping from 1882 the export of sheep meat and dairy products to Britain came to dominate New Zealand trade to the extent that the former colony became ever more dependent on the support of the "Home" market. As a consequence of Australian federation in 1901, New Zealand was no longer able to define itself in relation to the colonies across the Tasman and increasingly saw itself in terms of what it regarded as its special relationship with Britain.¹⁶ This was also an era of extensive political and social reform under a series of Liberal governments, which remained in power from 1891 to 1912. During this period New Zealand earned its title as the "social laboratory of the world" as a result of land reforms, the introduction of compulsory arbitration and old age pensions. As a consequence of these changes the role of government in the everyday lives of New Zealanders expanded greatly, and with it the need for an expanded programme of public

¹¹ Service *Edwardian Architecture* remains the standard survey of this period, but see also Service *London 1900*, Gray *Edwardian Architecture* and Fellows *Edwardian Architecture*.

¹² See, for instance, Sinclair *A Destiny Apart* and King *The*

Penguin History of New Zealand pp 280-282.

¹³ See Seager "Architectural Art in New Zealand" p 481 and Lochhead "The Architectural Art of Samuel Hurst Seager" pp 92-99.

¹⁴ In *A Selection of Competitive Designs for Proposed New*

Parliamentary Buildings

¹⁵ Belich *Paradise Reforged* pp 76-85.

¹⁶ For a discussion of this period see Belich *Paradise Reforged* pp 27ff.

building.¹⁷

Yet while the Liberals were putting in place many of the policies that would shape the way in which twentieth century New Zealanders thought about themselves and their country, contemporary commentators saw the character of New Zealand as being quintessentially British. In 1902, RF Irvine and OTJ Alpers, authors of the *Progress of New Zealand in the Century*, part of the *Nineteenth Century Series*, described New Zealanders as:

essentially a British stock; not English or Scottish or Irish, but all three. For these elements intermingle much more completely than in the population of the United Kingdom The British element amounts to 97 per cent of the whole [population].¹⁸

In a manner that is characteristic of the literature of the period, Irvine and Alpers emphasised that New Zealanders were "not only British, but the best British ... Nor had New Zealand, like some of the other colonies, a "birthstain" to turn to good ," a clear allusion to Australia's origins as a penal

¹⁷ See Hamer *The New Zealand Liberals*.

¹⁸ Irvine & Alpers *Progress of New Zealand in the Century* p 421. Two years later André Siegfried described New Zealand as "the English Colony which is most faithful to the mother-country." Quoted in Gibbons "The Climate

colony. For the authors:

the average New Zealand man is a sturdy, strong-knit, fresh-faced Briton ... the average New Zealand woman, if inferior in grace of carriage and delicacy of hue to her English sister, is usually, like Tennyson's women in "The Princess," "blowised with health."¹⁹

Twenty years earlier New Zealand had seen its destiny as part of the global Greater Britain, and potentially as a leader of a new British empire in the Pacific. Similarly, the English historian, JA Froude, had seen New Zealand as producing from its "inexhaustible soil and spiritual capabilities ... the great English poets, artists, philosophers, statesmen, soldiers of the future."²⁰ By 1900 this ambitious vision had faded to be reshaped as a belief in a New Zealand embodying a kind of exemplary Britishness, self-contained, self-reliant and independent. Having considered whether New Zealand would ever become part of the Australian Commonwealth Irvine and Alpers concluded that "Hers is too strong an individuality to be absorbed in any federation short of the Imperial."²¹

of Opinion" p 308.

¹⁹ Irvine and Alpers *Progress of New Zealand in the Century* p 423.

²⁰ Quoted in Irvine and Alpers *Progress of New Zealand in the Century* pp 420-421.

The readiness with which New Zealand joined Imperial conflicts, the South African War in 1899 and the First World War from 1914, also illustrates the close alignment of New Zealand with Britain. Indeed, New Zealand's unstinting commitment of troops to the conflict in Europe suggests, as Belich and others have pointed out, a desire to be considered the most loyal of the loyal.²² Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century New Zealand consistently demonstrated a stronger commitment to the concept of the Empire than either Canada or Australia. The country's small size and consequent vulnerability made it more ready to seek the protection provided by the Royal Navy, although such protection ultimately proved to be more imagined than real. Having rejected federation with Australia, New Zealand consistently favoured imperial federation, preferring to surrender a degree of independence to become part of a world power rather than part of a regional alliance. At Imperial Conferences in 1897 and 1902 Prime Minister Seddon consistently favoured closer imperial ties, as did his

²¹ Irvine and Alpers *Progress of New Zealand in the Century* p 432. See also Belich *Paradise Reforged* pp 76ff.

²² Belich *Paradise Reforged* pp 95-112.

successor, Sir Joseph Ward, at the conferences of 1907 and 1911. If this suggests that "New Zealand was an outstandingly "loyal" Dominion"²³ the reality was more complex. Strengthened imperial ties implied, for statesmen like Seddon and Ward, a greater say in imperial policy. At the Imperial Conference of 1907 Ward argued that

we should be above all things strenuous to preserve our entity and individuality in the control of our own country ... We want to have a distinct line of demarcation drawn ... between the responsibility we accept of our own free will and the responsibility which may be imposed upon us without our having any opportunity of conference or discussion with regard to it.²⁴

The paradox of closer imperial federation was the prospect of greater freedom of action on the part of the Dominion. This view may also help to explain why it is possible to discover in New Zealand architecture of this period apparently contradictory efforts to achieve a distinctive national voice at one level, while at another a desire to express even closer alliance with Great Britain seems to be the aim. It also helps us to understand why the apparent celebration of imperial links expressed through the architecture of Parliament Buildings is both an expression of solidarity with Britain as well as

an expression of New Zealand's distinctive understanding of its "British" national identity.

Architecturally and symbolically, Parliament Buildings represented the culmination of a trend in New Zealand public architecture which had been growing for over a decade. The extent to which the architects of the first buildings to adopt the new language of architectural imperialism were doing so with the conscious intention of expressing a distinctly British identity for New Zealand, as opposed to simply following an architectural fashion that had become well established at "Home," is difficult to determine, but there was certainly no sense of incongruity expressed when the Christchurch architects, Clarkson and Ballantyne, designed the Canterbury Hall, the centre-piece of the province's fiftieth jubilee celebrations of 1900, in the Imperial Baroque manner. As ostensibly the most "English" of New Zealand's nineteenth-century planned settlements, it was highly appropriate that Cantabrians should give such clear architectural expression to their sense of British identity. The Canterbury Hall was, in many respects, an exceptional case. It was essentially an exhibition building for which a future use

had to be found once its original, very specific purpose, had been served. Most public buildings, however, were designed to serve a permanent and prominent role in their communities, whether as post offices, court houses or government offices. The enormous expansion of central government that occurred after the turn of the twentieth century provided an unrivalled opportunity to signal the presence of the controlling hand of government in communities the length and breadth of the country through architectural means. Eighty years later the abrupt contraction of central government services was to leave many of these buildings empty, a prey to the wrecker's hammer or to the often disfiguring hand of privatisation.

The Government Architect's office, under the direction of the Scot John Campbell from 1888, showed remarkable invention in designing post offices for towns, large and small, throughout the country, whether in timber or masonry construction, which shared a recognisable vocabulary and which expressed at one and the same time, the invisible links of postal and telegraphic communication which linked the country together and which, beyond

²³ Wood *New Zealand in the World* p 84.

²⁴ Wood *New Zealand in the World* pp 84-85.

national borders, connected the Dominion with the heart of Empire. There existed a clear architectural hierarchy from the modest timber Post Office in Dargeville (1902), to the much grander brick and plaster building in Greymouth of 1904-8 (its importance conceivably augmented by the fact that Seddon, the premier, represented the West Coast) and ultimately to the palatial buildings of Wellington (1908-12) and Auckland (1908-12). Neither of these buildings gave away much in grandeur to the post office at the very heart of empire, Sir Henry Tanner's Central Post office in the City of London (1907-11). Tanner's design, as Peter Richardson has demonstrated, served as the model for Campbell and Paton's Auckland and Wellington Post Offices, a link which was almost certainly intended to be recognised by those who had the opportunity to compare the two buildings.²⁵ Indeed, the Post Master General, Hon. Robert Heaton Rhodes, noted that Aucklanders had reason "to be proud of their new Post Office, resembling as it did the new General Post Office in England."²⁶

In small towns, post offices served as all

purpose government offices while the post master was the local representative of officialdom. Larger provincial centres boasted both government offices as well as court houses. Perhaps the most spectacularly Baroque of all these was the flamboyant brick and stone office building erected in Napier in 1902-4, a building that was destroyed, along with all the official records it housed, in the Hawkes' Bay earthquake of 1931. Seddon's influence ensured that the West Coast enjoyed excellent government services, with government offices being built in Hokitika (1908-9 and 1912-13) and a Court House in Greymouth (1911-12). The Magistrates' Court in Wellington (1902-3), brought the new Imperial Baroque style to the very heart of the capital's governmental centre, the solidity of its masonry construction in marked contrast to the timber construction of the adjacent Government Offices of 1875-76, designed by the Colonial Architect, William Clayton.

Some accommodation also seems to have been made for expressing regional differences. Campbell had begun his New Zealand architectural career in Dunedin in 1882, and as

a Scot he probably had sympathy for the desire of Otago's settlers to preserve links with their predominantly Scottish origins within the context of a common British identity. Dunedin's Law Courts (1899-1902) are thus more Scottish baronial in style than Imperial Baroque, but the message it conveys is nevertheless closely aligned with those of governmental buildings throughout the Dominion.

Belich has emphasised the similarity which exists between turn-of-the century Scotland's accommodation of its sense of national identity within the close union of the United Kingdom and New Zealand's own preference for a sense of independence that was tempered by a similarly close relationship with Imperial Britain.²⁷ It is probably no accident that the architect who played a key role in shaping the Britishness of New Zealand's public architecture during the first decades of the twentieth century, John Campbell, was a Scot, as were many of his assistants. Indeed, as Richardson has shown, there was a network of expatriate Scots working in public works offices across the empire, sharing information

²⁵ Richardson "An Architecture of Empire" pp 166-167.

²⁶ Anon. "Auckland's New G.P.O" p 9, quoted in

Richardson "An Architecture of Empire" p 166.

²⁷ Belich *Paradise Reforged* p 21.

and ideas and subtly creating a trans-national Imperial British architecture that extended around the globe.²⁸

The importance attached to projecting a consistent image in public architecture was such that even when other influences were at work, the final result was little different from main-stream governmental architecture. This is amply demonstrated by the case of the Public Trust Office in Wellington (1905-9). Because of concerns about the building's performance in an earthquake, a design for a steel-framed building was obtained, on Seddon's recommendation, from the San Francisco firm of Reid Brothers in 1904. However, although the completed building incorporated additional structural steel to improve the seismic performance of the design, the American proposal was rejected as too expensive.²⁹ A consideration of almost equal importance must have been the desire to maintain the stylistic consistency of the government's building programme. Advanced American structural ideas were examined and found inappropriate and a more conservative

solution adopted, while the appearance of the building remained true to British precedent, specifically Belcher's Colchester Town Hall (1898-2).

As has already been suggested by the example of Clarkson and Ballantyne's Canterbury Hall, it was not just the government that was responsible for erecting public buildings in this imperial style. In Auckland the Australian architectural firm of JJ and EJ Clark were responsible for the new Town Hall in 1909, while Alexander Wiseman designed the Auckland Ferry Building (1912) in a manner that established a clear relationship with the recently-completed Central Post Office nearby.³⁰ Although Sir George Troup's Dunedin Railway Station (1904), is a more eclectic variation on the wider Imperial Baroque theme, it clearly belongs to this larger group of buildings. This fact is reinforced when it is linked to the ultimate British source of Troup's design, EW Mountford's Sheffield Town Hall (1890-97).

One prominent building that stands somewhat

apart from the larger group is JC Maddison's Government Offices in Christchurch (1909).³¹ Rather than adopting the prevailing Baroque manner Maddison opted for the more sober monumentality of High Renaissance classicism. With its massive base of rusticated masonry, its Corinthian columns and pedimented window surrounds, Christchurch's Government Buildings reveal that Imperial Baroque was not the only stylistic option available to architects at the end of the century's first decade. It is difficult to know the extent to which Maddison was setting out on a new path in reaction to the exuberance of so much government building or whether he was simply remaining true to his use of the Renaissance classicism that had characterised the hotels and commercial buildings he had built in Christchurch during the preceding decades. More likely he was responding to the new sobriety that was appearing in contemporary British architecture, seen, for example in the work of another Scot, JJ Burnet, in his King Edward VII wing for the British Museum (1907). Buildings such as this were a sign that in Britain the heyday of Imperial

²⁸ Richardson "Building the Dominion" pp 272-282 and Appendix One p 345ff.

²⁹ Richardson "Building the Dominion" pp 305-309. See also Cochrane "Capital City Buildings" p 242.

³⁰ For the work of the Clarks in both Australia and New Zealand see Fowler "British Inheritance, Colonial Usage" pp 87-93. The history of the Ferry Building is recounted in Johnson *The Auckland Ferry Building*.

³¹ See *The Architectural Heritage of Christchurch 5: Government Buildings and Younge Government Buildings, Christchurch*.

Baroque was waning. In the post-war era the optimism and exuberance that was an integral part of Imperial Baroque would seem overdone and bombastic, while the nationalistic fervour that had underpinned it no longer carried conviction.

How then should we interpret the public architecture of a century ago? Many key examples have disappeared: in Wellington the Magistrates' Court, Post Office and Police Station have all been demolished. Post Offices in provincial towns, among them Nelson, Greymouth, Ashburton and Bulls, have been systematically destroyed. Many others have been sold or leased as commercial premises. Major buildings, such as the former Post Office, Magistrates' Court and Telephone Exchange in Auckland have all been converted to new uses. Others have been shorn of their ornament and are now mere shadows of their former splendour. Finally, the construction of Sir Basil Spence's Executive Office wing to Parliament, the Beehive (1970-79), effectively foreclosed any possibility that Parliament Buildings would be completed according to Campbell's original design. Its refurbishment by Warren

and Mahoney between 1992 and 1995, however, brought about a renewed appreciation of its architectural qualities, even if the precise meaning of the original design received little consideration.³²

The refurbishment of Campbell's Parliament Buildings and the recent adaptive reuse of the Auckland Post Office notwithstanding, recent history suggests that we are out of sympathy with the public architecture of the early twentieth century and that we understand it even less. Yet in spite of this, I would argue, that it has much to tell us about New Zealand's sense of national identity during a formative period in our history. At a time when ideas of an independent national identity were only beginning to form, our public buildings clearly expressed the nation's conviction in its continued Britishness. The prominent position these buildings occupied in our cities and towns, the key roles they played in the lives of the country's citizens, all affirmed that they were British subjects. The fact that New Zealand's young men were so ready to enlist to fight and die in a war on the far side of the world may not have been directly influenced

by the presence of post offices, governmental buildings and court houses in the towns and districts where they lived and worked, but at a subliminal level they all asserted the shared Britishness of New Zealand's population.

It was this shared sense of New Zealand as a Better Britain that possessed a special relationship with the "motherland" that made New Zealand the most loyal of all the Dominion's, the one that made, on the basis of population, the heaviest commitment to the Great War. The public buildings of this period also show that identity is a continuously evolving concept, but also one that can have multiple facets at any single point in time. At a time when Pākehā were eagerly exploring new ways of expressing New Zealandness in their domestic architecture, they were content to declare their shared Britishness through public buildings.³³ In other words national identity can be both synchronically and diachronically diverse. In the New Zealand of the twenty-first century, this is a condition that is unlikely to change.

³² See Lochhead "Isolated Fragments [Parliament Buildings 1865-1995]" pp 76-78.

³³ For a reading of domestic architecture during this same period see Lochhead "Precedent versus Principle"

pp 29-42.

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