

Opening up new worlds for humans to respect

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ABSTRACT: In 1967, New Zealand architect James Beard took a year-long professional sabbatical in the US to learn more about regional and landscape planning. Following personal advice from MIT's Kevin Lynch, Beard headed to Harvard University to study toward a Master's qualification in their highly regarded landscape department under Professor Hideo Sasaki. While Beard was able to employ some of his learning in his later career (most notably at Kaitoke Regional Park in the 1970s), Beard returned to a New Zealand that was not yet ready for the broader regional-level consideration of landscape planning and design that he had discovered in his US studies.

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To say that James (Jim) Albert Beard (1924-2017) is a relatively unknown figure in New Zealand architectural history belies the fact that, particularly in Wellington, Beard has had a considerable impact on discourses across built environment disciplines and beyond. A larger-than-life figure in our capital city, Beard might be called upon for his expertise in architecture, urban planning, motorway design, landscape and regional planning, heritage conservation, or ecological conservation. Frequently there was no need to call upon this expertise – it was freely offered through various organisations and publications set up by Beard over his career, most notably in the *OSSMOSIS* publications (Open Space Society Monthly Opinions Suppositions Issues Statements) that were the vehicle of Beard's musings and agitations from 1988 to 2016.

But, our historical narratives are mostly penned from Auckland and, aside from a smattering of references in relation to Beard's presence in the Architectural Centre¹ and the professed affection for the Hannah Playhouse,² when it comes to those book-length historical surveys that record the architectural canon, such as it is in New Zealand, Beard and his work is only notable by omission. Stacpoole and Beaven, Hill, Mitchell and Chaplin, Hodgson, Shaw, Jenkins: Beard's work is absent from them all.³

¹ See, for example, Clark and Walker *Looking for the Local* p 37; Gatley and Walker *Vertical Living* pp 40, 95, 100, 129, 138, 205. Note: Clark and Walker give brief mention to Beard's Karori house (p 71) and include GH Burt's photographs of the same (pp 182-83).

² See, for example, Hannah "Architecture as Stage" pp 186-187; "NZIA-Resene NZ Awards for Architecture 2006" p 59.

³ In Chronological order: Stacpoole and Beaven *Architecture 1820-1970*; Hill *New Zealand Architecture* (1976); Mitchell and Chaplin *The Elegant Shed* (1984), Hodgson *Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand*

In fact, Stephanie Bonny and Marilyn Reynold's frequently overlooked 1980 survey of architects' houses, *Living with 50 Architects*, is the only book of this type in which you will find Beard's architecture featured – and he is the only architect to be featured twice in its pages; both his family house in Karori and his beach house in Waikanae are included.⁴

In this respect, we are lucky to have the 4 *Architects* monograph that was spearheaded by Wellington's Gordon Moller and published in 2010,⁵ which provides a brief illustrated survey of the career of Beard and three of his Wellington contemporaries: Bill Alington, Bill

(1990); Shaw *New Zealand Architecture*; Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* (2004).

⁴ Bonny and Reynolds *Living with 50 Architects* pp 32-33, 36-37; It should also be noted that Beard's Karori house was pictured and a brief description provided in Nikolaus Pevsner's 1959 Commonwealth survey. Pevsner "New Zealand" p 213.

⁵ Stratford *4 Architects, 1950-1980*.

Toomath and Derek Wilson. The book includes an essay by Paul Walker, which provides the first real canonical consideration of the architecture of these four architects, locating them within both New Zealand and international historical contexts.⁶

But this paper does not address Beard's architecture; it instead offers a brief look at Beard's other and arguably more significant professional interests—landscape architecture and planning—and more particularly his training and experiences in the US in the second half of the 1960s. If Beard's legacy as an architect of buildings has been somewhat obscured in our orthodox accounts of architectural history, his legacy as a landscape architect is almost completely unknown. This paper is a small step toward rectifying that situation.

⁶ Mention should also be made of the David Kernohan's *Wellington New Buildings* and the more recent *Long Live the Modern* survey, edited by Julia Gatley (2008), both of which include short descriptions of buildings designed by Beard (those in *Long Live the Modern* were authored by Christine McCarthy). While these books provide a valuable catalogue of many key buildings, it is difficult to consider them as canonical, insofar as they lack a critically normative historical narrative that coherently connects the individual buildings that they survey.

Beyond architecture

Beard graduated Callandar Memorial Scholar from the Wellington Technical College in 1940 and began his architectural career in the Architect's Office of the government's Public Works Department (PWD) as an architectural cadet in 1941.⁷ He began formal architectural education, sponsored by the PWD, at Auckland University College (AUC) School of Architecture in 1943 – returning to his job between university semesters.⁸

It is impossible to write about this period of the School of Architecture's history without at least some reference to the students who formed themselves into the Architectural Group in 1946. That group of students were an active voice advocating for change to the School of Architecture's curriculum, which they perceived to be terribly out of date.⁹ The changes advocated were drawn from strongly held convictions about the need for a modern (if not explicitly modernist) approach to shaping the environment. Their 1946 manifesto, "On the necessity for architecture,"

⁷ Beard "JA Beard Resume" pp 1-2.

⁸ Beard "Session 2 – Career Beginnings" Track 2.02/0:00:48.

⁹ For a detailed account of the Architectural Group's membership and activities, see *Group Architects*.

lays out their philosophical foundation, making a made bold claims for the centrality of the architect in the total planning of the modern environment:

This concept of the whole environment as a planned and pleasant entity is architecture. Only architecture can successfully arrange this background to our daily lives.¹⁰

Having started slightly earlier than most of the Architectural Group members (most of whom began their studies at Auckland from 1944-45) meant that, by the time of they were at their most vociferous (from the 1946 manifesto and first edition of the thereafter aborted journal entitled, *planning*, to the appeal to the AUC Council in 1948),¹¹ Beard was himself employed by the school in a tutoring role.¹² He recalls being confused by the dichotomy that resulted from being both a staff member and a senior student – in the end, electing to turn down an invitation to join the group despite having great sympathy for their concerns.¹³

¹⁰ The Architectural Group *On the Necessity for Architecture* np.

¹¹ McCarthy "The Roaring Forties" pp 31-33.

¹² Beard "Application Particulars" p 3.

¹³ Beard "Session 3 - School of Architecture" Track 3.01/0:19:50.

This is worth noting because we can see, in the quotation above, an important motivating factor that helps to shape Beard's career; the belief that architects must think beyond individual buildings to achieve successful environments. The manifesto also declares that architects must utilise benefits of scientific understanding in their work and, most importantly, have the improvement of society (for all) at the foundation of their endeavour.¹⁴ These concerns are not, as Clark and Walker have observed, inconsistent with principles espoused in modernist architectural discourse of the period.¹⁵

But, where the members of the Architectural Group gravitated into private practice after graduating (for the most part designing individual houses of timber and, in some cases, concrete block), Beard returned to his

¹⁴ The Architectural Group *On the Necessity for Architecture* np.

¹⁵ Although, the Architectural Group's manifesto is less clear about the scope of this scientific knowledge, seemingly limiting their thoughts to machine-production and standardisation. Other more established figures explicitly called for a systematic scientific understanding of life in all its aspects – see, for example, the book length manifestos of Richard Neutra (*Survival through Design*) and Walter Gropius (*Scope of Total Architecture*).

job in the Government Architect's office (now with the Ministry of Works (MoW) after the PWD was reorganised in 1947). Here, Beard would be exposed to a wide variety of nationally-significant public infrastructure planning and projects on the office's drawing boards – designs that would be realised with state-of-the-art construction methods. In essence, Beard was living and breathing the modernist ideals expressed in the Architectural Group manifesto.

Town planning

From both his time at the School of Architecture and his experience working for the MoW, Beard developed a fascination with the discipline of town planning.¹⁶ It is tempting to ascribe this to the influence of heroic architect-planners of the post-war period (e.g. in the manner of Le Corbusier and CIAM), and there is likely some truth to that. Certainly, the town planning taught as "Architectural Civics" in the fourth-year curriculum at the School of Architecture was limited to town and country planning legislation for architects, the history of Roman, medieval, and Renaissance town

¹⁶ Beard "Session 4 – Ministry of Works" Track 4.01/0:34:10.

planning, and the "recent" garden suburb design theories set out in Thomas Adam's *Recent Advances in Town Planning* (the latest edition of which was published in 1932).¹⁷ Any contemporary inspiration is more likely to have come from Beard's own reading and from discussions with his peers in his studio classes than from his formal education.

Wherever this interest originated from, it soon found an outlet in Beard's work for the MoW, where he worked directly under the Government Architect, Gordon Wilson, on masterplans for the Parliamentary Centre in Wellington and the University of Canterbury Campus in Christchurch (although both schemes remained unbuilt).¹⁸

It was the Architectural Centre that gave Beard's interest formal shape. The Centre was initially set up to provide architectural training to Wellington-based students. It was given significant impetus by support from both the Government Architect and the Head of the Town Planning Division, John Cox, who lent office space and staff, including

¹⁷ *Prospectus: School of Architecture* pp 10, 30.

¹⁸ Beard "Session 4 – Ministry of Works" Track 4.01/0:09:12.

Beard, to help teach the students.¹⁹ As well as assisting students with their Testimonies of Study, Beard tutored design, borrowing inspiration from Moholy-Nagy's Bauhaus curriculum.²⁰ When town planning classes were added to the Centre's offering in 1949, Beard was quick to sign up and would eventually complete the final exams (conducted by the Town Planning Institute in London) to become a qualified town planner.²¹ By this stage Beard's interest in planning had equalled, if not eclipsed, his interest in architecture.²² However, because the Architecture Division had sponsored his Auckland studies, Beard was unable to be step across the to the Town Planning Division, despite his growing interest and qualification.²³

¹⁹ Beard "Session 4 – Ministry of Works" Track 4.01/0:32:21. Beard credits George Porter and Graeme Kofoed as driving the Centre's founding, but insists that it would not have been established without Wilson and Cox's support. Gatley and Walker draw attention to alternative possibilities in their history of the Architectural Centre, *Vertical Living* p 21.

²⁰ Beard "Session 4 – Ministry of Works" Track 4.01/1:23:26.

²¹ Beard "Session 4 – Ministry of Works" Track 4.01/0:34:10.

²² Beard "Session 5 – City Planning at MIT" Track 5.01/0:01:00.

²³ Beard "Session 4 – Ministry of Works" Track

Looking Abroad

Beard's first overseas experience saw him take a leave of absence from his MoW employment and took him to the US on an Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) scholarship. Although Beard recalled that his decision to head to MIT was almost arbitrary; someone showed him a scholarship opportunity of which he took advantage,²⁴ among his collection of papers are a series of applications for travel scholarships and grants that tell of a more systematic attempt to leave these shores and gain international experience. Among these papers is a note that Professor Knight, AUC's Head of Architecture, had recommended Beard for the 1951 Peter Brooks Saltonstall '43 Memorial Scholarship to study at Harvard University,²⁵ but Beard had missed the deadline for applications.²⁶

Other applications prepared by Beard included a New Zealand Government Bursary for study in France, where he proposed

4.01/0:50:00.

²⁴ Beard "Session 5 – City Planning at MIT" Track 5.01/1:43:07.

²⁵ This scholarship was set up "to further the education and welfare of students from the Western Pacific." See "Man from Philippines gets Saltonstall Grant" np.

²⁶ Beard. Untitled resume np.

researching central city block redevelopment, university campus design, housing development and construction, developments in structural use of reinforced concrete, contemporary timber construction (including panels and laminated timber) and so on. The draft application shows some attempt to reduce the breadth of interests with some topics crossed out.²⁷

One of these deletions shows the first evidence of Beard's interest in landscape design:

Contemporary landscape garden design and architecture in relation to its natural environment – townscape and garden planning.²⁸

Also of interest are two separate itineraries for unidentified applications. One, simply titled "Personal Statement," outlined six research topics, some of which (including townscape, landscape and garden planning) were struck out in the application, suggesting this statement might have been part of an earlier draft. The itinerary would have Beard leave New Zealand in August, 1951 to spend time

²⁷ Beard "Application Particulars for New Zealand Government Bursary" p 4.

²⁸ Beard "Application Particulars for New Zealand Government Bursary" p 4.

research and studying in England and Europe, including three months in Le Corbusier's office, and attending a summer school at the Town Planning Institute, RIBA, or Architectural Association. The second stage of the itinerary would be completion of a postgraduate course in architecture at one of the following US programmes: Harvard Graduate School of Design, MIT, Chicago Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology, or Cranbrook Academy of Fine Arts.²⁹

The second itinerary is titled, "Suggested Research and Investigations to be carried out by JA Beard in United States of America," and is likely to be a draft of the application for the MIT scholarship that Beard eventually travelled under.³⁰ It proposes research at MIT from June to September 1951, repeating many of the study topics as the other applications (although omitting townscape and landscape). The itinerary also lists a further three months of travel to look at various design typologies

²⁹ Beard "Personal Statement" p 1.

³⁰ Although there is a reference to the work he is currently undertaking for the "Department," which suggests the document might have been part of an internal application – perhaps even for his leave of absence.

(university campus, dental school, and scientific laboratories) on the "West Coast and East Coast of USA," noting that most of that time would be spent on the West Coast and drawing attention to the applicability of the investigations to ongoing work in the Ministry.³¹

MIT

Beard's travel to the US and studies were more circumscribed than the proposed itineraries. In total, he spent the six months of approved MoW leave in 1951-52 in the US; four as a "visiting student" at MIT's City Planning Department and a further two months travelling with an Australian friend.³²

As a visiting student, Beard was not enrolled in courses or studying towards a degree qualification. Instead, his time at MIT was spent working as a research assistant for Kevin Lynch. At that time, Lynch was collaborating with Gyorgy Kepes on an approach to understanding and documenting city form that would, between 1955-60, be refined and published as the instantly seminal

³¹ Beard "Suggested Research and Investigations" p 1.

³² Beard "Session 5 – City Planning at MIT" Track 5.01/0:20:44.

urban design text, *The Image of the City*.³³ The research that Beard carried out under Lynch's supervision consisted of tedious town planning survey; collecting and tabulating extensive urban data (e.g. street systems and land ownership and use, etc.). What made the work interesting for Beard was Lynch's emphasis on the visual legibility of the city, taking a perceptual/psychological approach that utilised but moved beyond the generic planning data that Beard was helping to compile.³⁴

In hindsight, Beard recalled that Lynch's approach to categorising urban form was much more aligned to what would become landscape architecture. In that respect, Beard did not find occasion to use much of what he learned at MIT on his return to MoW employment, although it was very influential on the work that Beard would later be involved in when he studied at Harvard University's Landscape department.³⁵

³³ Raynsford "Civic Art in an Age of Cultural Relativism" p 47; Appelyard "The Major Published Works of Kevin Lynch" p 551.

³⁴ Beard "Session 5 – City Planning at MIT" Track 5.01/0:22:36.

³⁵ Beard "Session 5 – City Planning at MIT" Track 5.01/1:47:30.

Beard's final two months of travel in the US took him from coast to coast. In many respects it was the conventional US travel itinerary of a modernist architect;³⁶ it took in New York and Washington, but also Taliesin West (he had already visited Mies' Chicago while working with Lynch). The West Coast's Japanese-inflected timber building tradition, Maybeck, Greene and Green, Frank Lloyd Wright buildings San Francisco were also visited.

Beard's time at the MoW ended in 1954. Having recently married and with their first child, Beard found that his income was insufficient to cover growing expenses. He initially took up employment as an architect for the ANZ Bank (for more than twice his MoW salary), before accepting an invitation from ex-MoW colleague, Allot Gabites to join him in private practice in 1956.³⁷ Gabites, who had trained as a town planner at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London immediately after his WWII military service ended,³⁸ was attracting

several town planning commissions and needed someone to take on the architectural projects that often came with or followed on from those jobs.³⁹

Gabites and Beard remained in practice together until they merged with Toomath and Wilson; creating Gabites, Toomath, Beard, Wilson, and Partners in 1972.

Landscape Architecture at Harvard

An agreement between the Gabites and Beard, saw each of them take a six-month paid sabbatical in the 1960s.⁴⁰ While Gabites spent his sabbatical travelling through Europe and the US,⁴¹ Beard elected to supplement his interest in planning and the newly emerging field of environmental science and ecology (acquired through reading books such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962)). In fact, Beard recognised the challenge to modern town planning posed by the latter and wished to better understand and address these issues

in his own work.⁴² He sought advice from his former MIT supervisor, Lynch, about where he should do this and was advised to enrol in the Landscape Architecture programme being offered at Harvard University under Hideo Sasaki.⁴³

In travelling to Cambridge, Massachusetts to study Landscape Architecture at Harvard, Beard would be following in the footsteps of another New Zealand architect, Harry Turbott. Turbott began his architectural studies at AUC in 1949 (just as Beard was finishing his studies and returning to Wellington) and travelled to the US on a Fulbright scholarship in 1957.⁴⁴ Although Turbott returned to New Zealand as its first qualified landscape architect in 1961 (he spent some time working and travelling in the US and then Europe and Asia after his studies),⁴⁵ the decade between his Harvard training and Beard's encompassed a period of significant change for the relatively new discipline. While

³⁶ See, for example, Dudding "New Zealand Architects Abroad" pp 98-116.

³⁷ Beard "Session 6 – Gabites and Beard" Track 6.01/0:31:15.

³⁸ Beard "Session 6 – Gabites and Beard" Track 6.01/0:41:59.

³⁹ Beard "Session 6 – Gabites and Beard" Track 6.01/0:33:14.

⁴⁰ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.01/0:01:10.

⁴¹ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:05:50.

⁴² Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:01:39.

⁴³ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:00:10.

⁴⁴ For more detailed information about Turbot's career and overseas experiecnes, see: Falconer *Harry Turbott*; and Dudding "New Zealand Architects Abroad".

⁴⁵ Falconer *Harry Turbott* pp 42-54.

Turbott's course of study included conventional topics relating to the construction and planting of landscapes,⁴⁶ Beard arrived as the programme was being revolutionised under Sasaki's leadership (which began in 1958). Sasaki articulated that change in 1960, stating that:

The profession of landscape architecture stands at a critical fork in the road. One fork leads to a significant field of endeavor contributing to the betterment of human environment, while the other points to a subordinate field of superficial embellishment.⁴⁷

Sasaki is referring to a shift from an architectural basis for landscape architecture, toward larger and more diverse issues of regional environmental planning with strong emphasis on ecological outcomes. And it was driven by "new tools, such as aerial photo interpretation, computer graphics, and computer modelling,"⁴⁸ which Beard would discover first-hand.

Beard's exposure to these new directions exposed him to quite different ways for conceiving the environment from what he had learned during his town planning and

⁴⁶ Falconer *Harry Turbott* pp 38.

⁴⁷ Sasaki, in Steinitz "Landscape Planning" p 74.

⁴⁸ Simo "Hideo Sasaki" np.

architectural studies and his experience with large-scale projects at MoW. He recalls eye-opening lectures delivered by Reginald R Isaacs, Professor of Regional Planning, who discussed his economic survey of the US Eastern Seaboard – calculating the economic value of the marine fauna, and quantifying the effects on that value of human-caused pollution.⁴⁹

Carl Steinitz, then a research associate at Harvard's Laboratory for Computer Graphics and Spatial Analysis,⁵⁰ introduced large-scale environmental surveying. Students compiled ecological, sociological, and demographic data from live fieldwork in Delmarva Peninsula, then digitised it by manually punching cards to feed into a computer for analysis. The result was an attempt to holistically spatialise environmental data through computer mapping.⁵¹ Steinitz's research was a state-of-the-art technological development that provided Beard with a fascinating first glimpse of the role that electronic computing would soon take on.⁵² According to Charles

⁴⁹ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:15:22.

⁵⁰ "Carl Steinitz" np.

⁵¹ Waldheim "The Invention of GIS" np.

⁵² Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track

Waldheim, it was also:

a major breakthrough in the development of what would become GIS. Over the intervening half century, Steinitz emerged as the most significant voice of his generation on the theory and practice of landscape planning.⁵³

This systems approach to considering the broader cultural and ecological landscape (the foundation for which was laid in Lynch's work) was both informed by and a version of it (based on overlays of mapped data) popularised by Ian McHarg's book, *Design with Nature*, first published in 1969 and considered the seminal text on this topic. McHarg, then teaching at Pennsylvania, gave guest lectures at Harvard on multiple occasions, which Beard found to be valuable.⁵⁴ When he later had the opportunity to carry out a large-scale environmental planning project at Kaitoke Regional Park, Beard leaned heavily on McHarg's techniques.⁵⁵

There was a more conventional practical

1.02/0:21:36;

⁵³ Waldheim "The Invention of GIS" np.

⁵⁴ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/1:29:43.

⁵⁵ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/1:09:58.

element to the curriculum, including a "Plants of America" course that, for obvious reasons, was challenging for Beard.⁵⁶ Peter Hornbeck's teaching was also more conservative, compared with the more transformative work at the time; it was based on smaller-scale practical urban design projects for parks and campuses.⁵⁷

Still, Lynch's *Image of the City* loomed large over this complex period in the history of landscape and urban design and this was reflected in the approach to landscape aesthetics that Hornbeck was developing. This was played out most visibly for Beard in Hornbeck's "highway aesthetics" research project. Beard spent a large part of the final stage of his studies as a research assistant for this project, which also counted as credits toward his qualification.⁵⁸ The project, published in 1968 as *Highway Esthetics: Functional Criteria for Planning and Design*, made a case for the inclusion of aesthetic parameters among the more pragmatic

concerns of highway design. The report argued for integrated visual and behavioural criteria for the highway users—i.e. the drivers of the vehicles—and set about creating a framework of those relevant aesthetic qualities.

As one of five research assistants on the project (the majority of whom were doctoral students), Beard's role was significant. He directed a case study at Framingham – surveying the region to determine the best route for a highway. Among the myriad factors he was tasked to consider (including the pragmatics of hydrology, geology, etc.), were the sensory and perceptual qualities of the landscape; the objective was to provide a route that would ensure drivers were exposed to sufficient sensory stimulation so that they remained attentive at the wheel.⁵⁹ Beard also brought his previous MIT experience to bear in assisting Peter Jacobs' work for the project, exploring aesthetic frameworks in the directly in the manner of Lynch.⁶⁰

Back in New Zealand

Beard's return to New Zealand was like Turbott's, insofar as they both returned to a country where landscape architecture had not yet emerged as recognised profession. Beard prepared a paper that outlined what he had learned in the US, but had remained unpublished after being rejected by the New Zealand Planning Institute's journal, *Town Planning Quarterly*.⁶¹ While Turbott tried to establish a role for himself as a landscape architect in Auckland,⁶² Beard was able to return to his successful architectural career initially, at Gabites and Beard and, after the dissolution of the brief merger with Toomath and Wilson, in his own practice, James Beard and Co. Architects, Planning Consultants and Landscape Architects. In fact, it was during this 1970s period that Beard's most celebrated buildings were designed.

Yet, in 1969, a year after Beard's US experience, a landscape architecture programme was set up at Lincoln College (then part of Canterbury University) under Charlie Challenger. Challenger, initially a horticulturalist, retrained as a landscape

⁵⁶ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:51:07, 0:59:54.

⁵⁷ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:28:11.

⁵⁸ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/0:14:08.

⁵⁹ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/1:05:37.

⁶⁰ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/1:17:05.

⁶¹ Beard "Session 10 – Landscape at Harvard" Track 1.02/1:49:09.

⁶² Falconer *Harry Turbott* pp 60-61.

architect at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in 1967-68 (more or less contemporaneous with Beard's Harvard training).⁶³ While the Newcastle-upon-Tyne programme under Professor Brian Hackett claimed to be attentive to ecological concepts (inspired by Hackett's experiences of the already established discipline in Scandinavia), the revolutionising of the discipline that Beard had been exposed to across the Atlantic had not yet impacted there; unlike the systems approach to regional planning in the US, Hackett's conception of ecology was directed at a more localised ecological restoration: "derelict colliery sites ... and restoration of the steep banks of the River Tyne within the urban area were particularly influential."⁶⁴

Even though landscape commissions were slow in coming Beard's way, he was heavily involved in the burgeoning profession, becoming at one point the President of the New Zealand Association of Landscape Designers (NZALD) and being prominent in the later New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA). His contribution to the discipline in New Zealand is framed in this

⁶³ Falconer *Living in Paradox* p 90.

⁶⁴ Brenikov "Obituary: Professor Brian Hackett" np.

way:

Most visibly, Beard has exerted a sustained influence on attitudes to the landscape – as a regular commentator on national and civic policy and action. He has provided an eloquent and incisive conscience for the landscape – especially the urban landscape – as an advocate, expert witness, and writer.⁶⁵

The above passage is drawn from a citation prepared for the occasion of Beard being made an honorary fellow of the NZILA in 1998 and only briefly names a single Beard landscape project – Kaitoke Regional Park.⁶⁶ This is easily the most significant of Beard's works outside of his architectural career and, as noted above, the one in which he was most able to exercise his US training.

At the entrance to the regional park is the Te Marua Twin Lakes project (which included the buildings that make up the water treatment plant). While that project and the Kaitoke Regional Park are often conflated, as well they might be due to their contiguity in both time and location, they were separate projects. The twin lakes that are Wellington's freshwater reservoir were designed in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Beard after extensive

⁶⁵ Jones "Professional Recognition" p 9.

⁶⁶ Jones "Professional Recognition" p 9.

environmental assessment. Beard felt "god-like" in his ability to transform the land at large scale,⁶⁷ but noted that the recreational functions that were a part of the design were never realised.⁶⁸

Although having a new stream named after him as part of that project,⁶⁹ Beard played down any potential hubris by noting a preference for his ecological restoration at Mui Poto, at Abel Tasman Point. Beard purchased the fifty-hectares of very marginal and eroding farmland in the mid-1970s. Through a detailed conservation plan, a series of covenants placed over, what Beard terms, "the commons" ("energy, air, water, land, flora, fauna, sentience"), and the creation of the James Beard Environmental Trust, Beard has designed a regenerating landscape that allows human dwellings and activity as part of its ecology.⁷⁰ It is a landscape being delivered through a deep understanding of ecological

⁶⁷ Beard "Session 11 – Landscape Projects" Track 1.01/1:01:00.

⁶⁸ Beard "Session 13 – James Beard and Co." Track 1.01/0:57:27.

⁶⁹ Beard "Session 13 – James Beard and Co." Track 1.01/0:48:36.

⁷⁰ Beard "Session 11 – Landscape Projects" Track 1.01/1:35:42; Beard "James Beard Environmental Trust" p 1.

systems at the site and is enacted (and safeguarded) through legislation rather than the shovel.

Conclusion

It is important to note that, alongside the specific experiences that have been reported in this paper, Beard's US experiences consisted of a rich range of other events and acquaintances – social, institutional, professional, and so on. What Beard brought back to New Zealand went well beyond his education as a landscape architect; this paper only presents the "view through the marrow-hole of a dry bone," as Reyner Banham might declare;⁷¹ it leaves out the colour, joy and personality, and, of course, Beard's own output as a landscape architect, which still awaits critical attention. This paper does, however, present a contextual framework from within which such future work might take place.

More broadly, there are also key places within Beard's narrative that help to provide entry points for critically addressing the role of Wellington institutions in the narratives of

⁷¹ ... in reference to the pre-war histories of modern architecture, in Banham "The Glass Paradise" p 88.

New Zealand architectural history. The MoW and Architectural Centre were much more openly "international" than the smaller Architectural Group and could comfortably discuss the benefits of looking to other countries for inspiration. From this position, it is much easier to accord the Architectural Group's contribution its appropriate weight without being blinded by that "new pioneer" narrative of indigeneity that clings uncomfortably in an age when things colonial are no longer to be trusted.

And, if the concluding words were to be given to Beard himself, the paper must end with a "Beardian" plea for the broader architectural profession to reevaluate its role and worth in contemporary society:

The confusion of our urban fabric results from attitudes and values that, in shunning, hobbling, rejecting intellectual effort, emphasise irrelevant trivialities, diverting advertising, mixing innocent plodding humans with fossil-fueled velocipedes, sunless high rise squalid leaking habitat, screeching sirens, and so on.⁷²

Even at the beginning of Beard's professional career it was evident that architecture, as the art of designing buildings, was insufficient on its own to hold Beard's attention. But by the

⁷² Beard. Pers. Comm. 10 December 2010 p 3.

end of his career, he had turned his back on architecture completely. It is telling that, among the last scheduled OSSMOSIS issues is Number 89, entitled "OSSMOSIS Editor," in which Beard provides a single-paragraph biographical statement. In this quasi-eulogy, Beard dismisses a career in architecture:

James Beard... practised as a consultant building planner, city planner, and land planner. Appreciates the wonderful science of ecology, which opens up new worlds for humans to respect.⁷³

Acknowledgements

This research is grounded in a series of oral history recordings (approximately twenty-six hours) made by the author with Jim Beard over a 2007-2008. The author owes an enormous gratitude to Beard's generous sharing of time and memory. It is intended that the resulting audio recordings will be deposited at the National Library of New Zealand and made available (subject to Beard family restrictions) for research.

⁷³ Beard "OSSMOSIS Editor" p 1.

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